



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE



5319386632

D 23624

Edgeworth.

Cuentos y miscelaneas.
t. 2º y 3º.

~~74-3~~

~~27-1-56~~

41-5-12

23634

TALES,

82-3
Ed 3m

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VIII.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. HUNTER; BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY;
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND CO.; J. BOOKER;
SHERWOOD, JONES, AND CO.; G. B. WHITTAKER;
HARDING, TRIPHOOK, AND LEPARD; A. K. NEWMAN
AND CO.; R. SCHOLEY; R. SAUNDERS; T. TEGG;
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.; SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL;
T. MASON; J. DUNCAN; SMITH AND ELDER.

1825.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
MADAME DE FLEURY	1
THE DUN	85
MANŒUVRING	121



MADAME DE FLEURY.

CHAPTER I.

“ There oft are heard the notes of infant wo,
The short thick sob, loud scream, and shriller squall.
How can you, mothers, vex your infants so ?” POPE.

“ D'ABORD, madame, c'est impossible !—Madame ne descendra pas ici* ?” said François, the footman of madame de Fleury, with a half expostulatory, half indignant look, as he let down the step of her carriage at the entrance of a dirty passage, that led to one of the most miserable-looking houses in Paris.

“ But what can be the cause of the cries which I hear in this house ?” said madame de Fleury.

“ 'Tis only some child, who is crying,” replied François: and he would have put up the step, but his lady was not satisfied.

“ 'Tis nothing in the world,” continued he, with a look of appeal to the coachman, “ it *can* be nothing, but some children, who are locked up there above.

* In the first place, my lady, it is impossible ! Surely my lady will not get out of her carriage here ?

The mother, the workwoman my lady wants, is not at home, that's certain."

"I must know the cause of these cries; I must see these children," said madame de Fleury, getting out of her carriage.

François held his arm for his lady as she got out.

"Bon!" cried he with an air of vexation. "Si madame la veut absolument, à la bonne heure!—Mais madame sera abimée. Madame verra que j'ai raison. Madame ne montera jamais ce vilain escalier. D'ailleurs c'est au cinquième. Mais, madame, c'est impossible *."

Notwithstanding the impossibility, madame de Fleury proceeded; and bidding her talkative footman wait in the entry, made her way up the dark, dirty, broken staircase, the sound of the cries increasing every instant, till, as she reached the fifth story, she heard the shrieks of one in violent pain. She hastened to the door of the room from which the cries proceeded; the door was fastened, and the noise was so great, that though she knocked as loud as she was able, she could not immediately make herself heard. At last the voice of a child from within answered, "The door is locked—mammy has the key in her pocket, and won't be home till night; and here's Victoire has tumbled from the top of the big press, and it is she that is shrieking so."

Madame de Fleury ran down the stairs which she had ascended with so much difficulty, called to her footman, who was waiting in the entry, despatched him for a surgeon, and then she returned to obtain

* To be sure it must be as my lady pleases—but my lady will find it terribly dirty!—my lady will find I was right—my lady will never get up that shocking staircase,—it is impossible!

from some people who lodged in the house assistance to force open the door of the room in which the children were confined.

On the next floor there was a smith at work, filing so earnestly that he did not hear the screams of the children. When his door was pushed open, and the bright vision of madame de Fleury appeared to him, his astonishment was so great that he seemed incapable of comprehending what she said. In a strong provincial accent he repeated, "*Plait-il ?*" and stood aghast till she had explained herself three times: then suddenly exclaiming, "Ah ! c'est ça !" — he collected his tools precipitately, and followed to obey her orders. The door of the room was at last forced half open, for a press that had been overturned prevented its opening entirely. The horrible smells that issued did not overcome madame de Fleury's humanity: she squeezed her way into the room, and behind the fallen press saw three little children: the youngest, almost an infant, ceased roaring, and ran to a corner; the eldest, a boy of about eight years old, whose face and clothes were covered with blood, held on his knee a girl younger than himself, whom he was trying to pacify, but who struggled most violently, and screamed incessantly, regardless of madame de Fleury, to whose questions she made no answer.

"Where are you hurt, my dear?" repeated madame de Fleury, in a soothing voice. "Only tell me where you feel pain?"

The boy, showing his sister's arm, said, in a surly tone—"It is this that is hurt—but it was not I did it."

"It was, it *was*," cried the girl as loud as she could vociferate: "it was Maurice threw me down from the top of the press."

"No—it was you that were pushing me, Victoire, and you fell backwards.—Have done screeching, and show your arm to the lady."

"I can't," said the girl.

"She won't," said the boy.

"She *cannot*," said madame de Fleury, kneeling down to examine it. "She cannot move it: I am afraid that it is broken."

"Don't touch it! don't touch it!" cried the girl, screaming more violently.

"Ma'am, she screams that way for nothing often," said the boy. "Her arm is no more broke than mine, I'm sure; she'll move it well enough when she's not cross."

"I am afraid," said madame de Fleury, "that her arm is broken."

"Is it indeed?" said the boy, with a look of terror.

"O! don't touch it—you'll kill me, you are killing me," screamed the poor girl, whilst madame de Fleury with the greatest care endeavoured to join the bones in their proper place, and resolved to hold the arm till the arrival of the surgeon.

From the feminine appearance of this lady, no stranger would have expected such resolution; but with all the natural sensibility and graceful delicacy of her sex, she had none of that weakness or affectation, which incapacitates from being useful in real distress. In most sudden accidents, and in all domestic misfortunes, female resolution and presence of mind are indispensably requisite: safety, health, and life, often depend upon the fortitude of women. Happy they, who, like madame de Fleury, possess strength of mind united with the utmost gentleness of manner and tenderness of disposition!

Soothed by this lady's sweet voice, the child's rage subsided; and no longer struggling, the poor little girl sat quietly on her lap, sometimes writhing and moaning with pain.

The surgeon at length arrived: her arm was set: and he said, "that she had probably been saved much future pain by madame de Fleury's presence of mind."

"Sir,—will it soon be well?" said Maurice to the surgeon.

"O yes, very soon, I dare say," said the little girl. "To-morrow, perhaps; for now that it is tied up, it does not hurt me to signify—and after all, I do believe, Maurice, it was not you threw me down."

As she spoke, she held up her face to kiss her brother.—"That is right," said madame de Fleury: "there is a good sister."

The little girl put out her lips, offering a second kiss, but the boy turned hastily away to rub the tears from his eyes with the back of his hand.

"I am not cross now: am I, Maurice?" said she.

"No, Victoire, I was cross myself when I said *that*."

As Victoire was going to speak again, the surgeon imposed silence, observing, that she must be put to bed, and should be kept quiet. Madame de Fleury laid her upon the bed, as soon as Maurice had cleared it of the things with which it was covered; and as they were spreading the ragged blanket over the little girl, she whispered a request to madame de Fleury, that she would "stay till her mamma came home, to beg Maurice off from being whipped, if mamma should be angry."

Touched by this instance of goodness, and compassionating the desolate condition of these children, madame de Fleury complied with Victoire's request; resolving to remonstrate with their mother for leaving them locked up in this manner. They did not know to what part of the town their mother was gone; they could tell only, "that she was to go to a great many different places to carry back work, and to bring home more; and that she expected to be in by five." It was now half after four.

Whilst madame de Fleury waited, she asked the boy to give her a full account of the manner in which the accident had happened.

"Why, ma'am," said Maurice, twisting and untwisting a ragged handkerchief as he spoke, "the first beginning of all the mischief was, we had nothing to do; so we went to the ashes to make dirt pies: but Babet would go so close that she burnt her petticoat, and threw about all our ashes, and plagued us, and we whipped her: but all would not do, she would not be quiet; so to get out of her reach, we climbed up by this chair on the table to the top of the press, and there we were well enough for a little while, till somehow we began to quarrel about the old scissors, and we struggled hard for them, till I got this cut."

Here he unwound the handkerchief, and for the first time showed the wound, which he had never mentioned before.

"Then," continued he, "when I got the cut, I shoved Victoire, and she pushed at me again, and I was keeping her off, and her foot slipped, and down she fell; and caught by the press-door, and pulled it and me after her, and that's all I know."

"It is well that you were not both killed," said

madame de Fleury. "Are you often left locked up in this manner by yourselves, and without any thing to do?"

"Yes, always, when mamma is abroad—except sometimes we are let out upon the stairs, or in the street; but mamma says we get into mischief there."

This dialogue was interrupted by the return of the mother. She came up stairs slowly, much fatigued, and with a heavy bundle under her arm.

"How now! Maurice? how comes my door open? What's all this?" cried she in an angry voice; but seeing a lady sitting upon her child's bed, she stopped short in great astonishment. Madame de Fleury related what had happened, and averted her anger from Maurice, by gently expostulating upon the hardship and hazard of leaving her young children in this manner during so many hours of the day.

"Why, my lady," replied the poor woman, wiping her forehead, "every hard-working woman in Paris does the same with her children, and what can I do else? I must earn bread for these helpless ones, and to do that I must be out backwards and forwards, and to the furthest parts of the town, often from morning till night, with those that employ me; and I cannot afford to send the children to school, or to keep any kind of a servant to look after them; and when I'm away, if I let them run about these stairs and entries, or go into the streets, they do get a little exercise and air, to be sure, such as it is; on which account I do let them out sometimes; but then a deal of mischief comes of that, too—they learn all kinds of wickedness, and would grow up to be no better than pickpockets, if they were let often to consort with the little vagabonds they find in the streets. So what to do better for them I don't know."

The poor mother sat down upon the fallen press, looked at Victoire, and wept bitterly. Madame de Fleury was struck with compassion : but she did not satisfy her feelings merely by words of comfort, or by the easy donation of some money—she resolved to do something more, and something better.

CHAPTER II.

“ Come often, then ; for haply in my bow’r
Amusement, knowledge, wisdom, thou mayst gain :
If I one soul improve, I have not liv’d in vain.”

BEATTIE.

It is not so easy to do good as those who have never attempted it may imagine ; and they who without consideration follow the mere instinct of pity, often by their imprudent generosity create evils more pernicious to society than any which they partially remedy. “ Warm Charity, the general friend,” may become the general enemy, unless she consults her head as well as her heart. Whilst she pleases herself with the idea that she daily feeds hundreds of the poor, she is perhaps preparing want and famine for thousands. Whilst she delights herself with the anticipation of gratitude for her bounties, she is often exciting only unreasonable expectations, inducing habits of dependence, and submission to slavery.

Those who wish to do good should attend to experience, from whom they may receive lessons upon the largest scale that time and numbers can afford.

Madame de Fleury was aware that neither a be-

nevolent disposition nor a large fortune was sufficient to enable her to be of real service, without the constant exercise of her judgment. She had therefore listened with deference to the conversation of well-informed men upon those subjects on which ladies have not always the means or the wish to acquire extensive and accurate knowledge. Though a Parisian belle, she had read with attention some of those books which are generally thought too dry or too deep for her sex. Consequently her benevolence was neither wild in theory, nor precipitate nor ostentatious in practice.

Touched with compassion for a little girl, whose arm had been accidentally broken, and shocked by the discovery of the confinement and the dangers to which numbers of children in Paris were doomed, she did not make a parade of her sensibility. She did not talk of her feelings in fine sentences to a circle of opulent admirers, nor did she project for the relief of the little sufferers some magnificent establishment, which she could not execute nor superintend. She was contented with attempting only what she had reasonable hopes of accomplishing.

The gift of education she believed to be more advantageous than the gift of money to the poor ; as it ensures the means both of future subsistence and happiness. But the application even of this incontrovertible principle requires caution and judgment. To crowd numbers of children into a place called a school, to abandon them to the management of any person called a schoolmaster or a schoolmistress, is not sufficient to secure the blessings of a good education. Madame de Fleury was sensible that the greatest care is necessary in the choice of the person to whom young children are to be intrusted: she

knew that only a certain number can be properly directed by one superintendent; and that by attempting to do too much, she might do nothing, or worse than nothing. Her school was formed, therefore, on a small scale, which she could enlarge to any extent, if it should be found to succeed. From some of the families of poor people, who in earning their bread are obliged to spend most of the day from home, she selected twelve little girls, of whom Victoire was the eldest, and she was between six and seven.

The person under whose care madame de Fleury wished to place these children was a nun of the *Sœurs de la Charité*, with whose simplicity of character, benevolence, and mild, steady temper, she was thoroughly acquainted. Sister Frances was delighted with the plan. Any scheme that promised to be of service to her fellow-creatures was sure of meeting with her approbation; but this suited her taste peculiarly, because she was extremely fond of children. No young person had ever boarded six months at her convent without becoming attached to good sister Frances.

The period of which we are writing was some years before convents were abolished; but the strictness of their rules had in many instances been considerably relaxed. Without much difficulty, permission was obtained from the abbess for our nun to devote her time during the day to the care of these poor children, upon condition that she should regularly return to her convent every night before evening prayers. The house which madame de Fleury chose for her little school was in an airy part of the town; it did not face the street, but was separated from other buildings at the back of a court, retired from noise and bustle. The two rooms intended for

the occupation of the children were neat and clean, but perfectly simple, with whitewashed walls, furnished only with wooden stools and benches, and plain deal tables. The kitchen was well lighted (for light is essential to cleanliness), and it was provided with utensils ; and for these appropriate places were allotted, to give the habit and the taste of order. The school-room opened into a garden larger than is usually seen in towns. The nun, who had been accustomed to purchase provision for her convent, undertook to prepare daily for the children breakfast and dinner ; they were to sup and sleep at their respective homes. Their parents were to take them to sister Frances every morning, when they went out to work, and to call for them upon their return home every evening. By this arrangement, the natural ties of affection and intimacy between the children and their parents would not be loosened ; they would be separate only at the time when their absence must be inevitable. Madame de Fleury thought, that any education, which estranges children entirely from their parents, must be fundamentally erroneous ; that such a separation must tend to destroy that sense of filial affection and duty, and those principles of domestic subordination, on which so many of the interests, and much of the virtue and happiness, of society depend. The parents of these poor children were eager to trust them to her care, and they strenuously endeavoured to promote what they perceived to be entirely to their advantage. They promised to take their daughters to school punctually every morning—a promise which was likely to be kept, as a good breakfast was to be ready at a certain hour, and not to wait for any body. The parents

looked forward with pleasure also to the idea of calling for their little girls at the end of their day's labour, and of taking them home to their family supper. During the intermediate hours, the children were constantly to be employed, or in exercise. It was difficult to provide suitable employments for their early age; but even the youngest of those admitted could be taught to wind balls of cotton, thread, and silk, for haberdashers; or they could shell peas and beans, &c. for a neighbouring *traiteur*; or they could weed in a garden. The next in age could learn knitting and plain-work, reading, writing, and arithmetic. As the girls should grow up, they were to be made useful in the care of the house. Sister Frances said she could teach them to wash and iron, and that she would make them as skilful in cookery as she was herself. This last was doubtless a rash promise; for in most of the mysteries of the culinary art, especially in the medical branches of it, in making savoury messes palatable to the sick, few could hope to equal the neat-handed sister Frances. She had a variety of other accomplishments—but her humility and good sense forbade her, upon the present occasion, to mention these. She said nothing of embroidery, or of painting, or of cutting out paper, or of carving in ivory, though in all these she excelled: her cuttings out in paper were exquisite as the finest lace; her embroidered housewives, and her painted boxes, and her fan-mounts, and her curiously-wrought ivory toys, had obtained for her the highest reputation in the convent, amongst the best judges in the world. Those only who have philosophically studied and thoroughly understand the nature of fame and vanity can justly appreciate the self-denial, or magnanimity,

vigilance, whilst diffidence of her own abilities was happily supported by her high opinion of madame de Fleury's judgment. This lady constantly visited her pupils every week ; not in the hasty, negligent manner, in which fine ladies sometimes visit charitable institutions, imagining that the honour of their presence is to work miracles, and that every thing will go on rightly when they have said, "*Let it be so ;*" or, "*I must have it so.*" Madame de Fleury's visits were not of this dictatorial or cursory nature. Not minutes, but hours, she devoted to these children—she who could charm by the grace of her manners, and delight by the elegance of her conversation, the most polished circles* and the best-informed societies of Paris, preferred to the glory of being admired the pleasure of being useful:—

“ Her life, as lovely as her face,
Each duty mark'd with every grace ;
Her native sense improved by reading,
Her native sweetness by good-breeding.”

* It was of this lady that Marmontel said—“ She has the art of making the most common thoughts appear new, and the most uncommon, simple, by the elegance and clearness of her expressions.”

CHAPTER III.

“ Ah me ! how much I fear lest pride it be :
But if that pride it be, which thus inspires,
Beware, ye dames ! with nice discernment see
Ye quench not too the sparks of nobler fires.”

SHENSTONE.

By repeated observation, and by attending to the minute *reports* of sister Frances, madame de Fleury soon became acquainted with the habits and temper of each individual in this little society. The most intelligent and the most amiable of these children was Victoire. Whence her superiority arose, whether her abilities were naturally more vivacious than those of her companions, or whether they had been more early developed by accidental excitation, we cannot pretend to determine, lest we should involve ourselves in the intricate question respecting natural genius—a metaphysical point, which we shall not in this place stop to discuss. Till the world has an accurate philosophical dictionary (a work not to be expected in less than half a dozen centuries), this question will never be decided to general satisfaction. In the mean time, we may proceed with our story.

Deep was the impression made on Victoire's heart by the kindness that madame de Fleury showed her at the time her arm was broken ; and her gratitude was expressed with all the enthusiastic *fondness* of childhood. Whenever she spoke or heard of madame de Fleury, her countenance became interested and animated, in a degree that would have astonished a cool English spectator. Every morning her first question to sister Frances was—“ Will *she* come to-

day?"—If madame de Fleury was expected, the hours and the minutes were counted, and the sand in the hourglass that stood on the school-room table was frequently shaken. The moment she appeared, Victoire ran to her, and was silent; satisfied with standing close beside her, holding her gown when unperceived, and watching, as she spoke and moved, every turn of her countenance. Delighted by these marks of sensibility, sister Frances would have praised the child, but was warned by madame de Fleury to refrain from injudicious eulogiums, lest she should teach her affectation.

"If I must not praise, you will permit me at least to love her," said sister Frances.

Her affection for Victoire was increased by compassion: during two months the poor child's arm hung in a sling, so that she could not venture to play with her companions. At their hours of recreation, she used to sit on the school-room steps, looking down into the garden at the scene of merriment, in which she could not partake.

For those who know how to find it, there is good in every thing. Sister Frances used to take her seat on the steps, sometimes with her work, and sometimes with a book; and Victoire, tired of being quite idle, listened with eagerness to the stories which sister Frances read, or watched with interest the progress of her work: soon she longed to imitate what she saw done with so much pleasure, and begged to be taught to work and read. By degrees, she learned her alphabet; and could soon, to the amazement of her school-fellows, read the names of all the animals in sister Frances's *picture book*. No matter how trifling the thing done, or the knowledge acquired, a great point

is gained by giving the desire for employment. Children frequently become industrious from impatience of the pains and penalties of idleness. Count Rumford showed that he understood childish nature perfectly well, when, in his house of industry at Munich, he compelled the young children to sit for some time idle in a gallery round the hall, where others a little older than themselves were busied at work. During Victoire's state of idle convalescence, she acquired the desire to be employed, and she consequently soon became more industrious than her neighbours. Succeeding in her first efforts, she was praised—was pleased, and persevered till she became an example of activity to her companions. But Victoire, though now nearly seven years old, was not quite perfect. Naturally, or accidentally, she was very passionate, and not a little self-willed.

One day being mounted, horsemanlike, with whip in hand upon the banister of the flight of stairs leading from the school-room to the garden, she called in a tone of triumph to her play-fellows, desiring them to stand out of the way; and see her slide from top to bottom. At this moment sister Frances came to the school-room door, and forbade the feat: but Victoire, regardless of all prohibition, slid down instantly, and moreover was going to repeat the glorious operation, when sister Frances, catching hold of her arm, pointed to a heap of sharp stones that lay on the ground upon the other side of the banisters.

"I am not afraid," said Victoire.

"But if you fall there, you may break your arm again."

"And if I do, I can bear it," said Victoire. "Let me go, pray let me go—I must do it."

"No; I forbid you, Victoire, to slide down again!—Babet, and all the little ones, would follow your example, and perhaps break their necks."

The nun, as she spoke, attempted to compel Victoire to dismount: but she was so much of a heroine, that she would do nothing upon compulsion. Clinging fast to the banisters, she resisted with all her might; she kicked and screamed, and screamed and kicked; but at last her feet were taken prisoners: then grasping the railway with one hand, with the other she brandished high the little whip.

"What!" said the mild nun, "would you strike me with that *arm*?"

The arm dropped instantly—Victoire recollected madame de Fleury's kindness the day when the arm was broken: dismounting immediately, she threw herself upon her knees in the midst of the crowd of young spectators, and begged pardon of sister Frances. For the rest of the day she was as gentle as a lamb; nay, some assert that the effects of her contrition were visible during the remainder of the week.

Having thus found the secret of reducing the little rebel to obedience by touching her on the tender point of gratitude, the nun had recourse to this expedient in all perilous cases: but one day, when she was boasting of the infallible operation of her charm, madame de Fleury advised her to forbear recurring to it frequently, lest she should wear out the sensibility she so much loved. In consequence of this counsel, Victoire's violence of temper was sometimes reduced by force, and sometimes corrected by reason; but the principle and the feeling of gratitude were not exhausted or weakened in the struggle. The hope of reward operated upon her generous mind more powerfully than the fear of punishment; and madame d

Fleury devised rewards with as much ability as some legislators invent punishments.

Victoire's brother Maurice, who was now of an age to earn his own bread, had a strong desire to be bound apprentice to the smith who worked in the house where his mother lodged. This most ardent wish of his soul he had imparted to his sister: and she consulted her benefactress, whom she considered as all-powerful in this, as in every other affair.

"Your brother's wish shall be accomplished," replied madame de Fleury, "if you can keep your temper one month. If you are never in a passion for a whole month, I will undertake that your brother shall be bound apprentice to his friend the smith. To your companions, to sister Frances, and above all to yourself, I trust, to make me a just report this day month."

CHAPTER IV.

"You she preferr'd to all the gay resorts,
Where female vanity might wish to shine,
The pomp of cities, and the pride of courts."

LYTTETON.

At the end of the time prescribed, the judges, including Victoire herself, who was the most severe of them all, agreed she had justly deserved her reward. Maurice obtained his wish; and Victoire's temper never relapsed into its former bad habits—so powerful is the effect of a well-chosen motive!—Perhaps the historian may be blamed for dwelling on such

trivial anecdotes ; yet a lady, who was accustomed to the conversation of deep philosophers and polished courtiers, listened without disdain to these simple annals. Nothing appeared to her a trifle that could tend to form the habits of temper, truth, honesty, order, and industry ;—habits, which are to be early induced, not by solemn precepts, but by practical lessons. A few more examples of these shall be recorded, notwithstanding the fear of being tiresome.

One day little Babet, who was now five years old, saw, as she was coming to school, an old woman sitting at a corner of the street, beside a large black brazier full of roasted chestnuts. Babet thought that the chestnuts looked and smelled very good ; the old woman was talking earnestly to some people, who were on her other side ; Babet filled her work-bag with chestnuts, and then ran after her mother and sister, who, having turned the corner of the street, had not seen what passed. When Babet came to the school-room, she opened her bag with triumph, displayed her treasure, and offered to divide it with her companions. “ Here, Victoire,” said she, “ here is the largest chestnut for you.”

But Victoire would not take it ; for she said that Babet had no money, and that she could not have come honestly by these chestnuts. She spoke so forcibly upon this point, that even those who had the tempting morsel actually at their lips, forbore to bite ; those who had bitten, laid down their half-eaten prize ; and those who had their hands full of chestnuts, rolled them back again towards the bag. Babet cried with vexation.

“ I burned my fingers in getting them for you, and now you won't eat them !—Nor I must not eat them !” said she : then curbing her passion, she

added, " But at any rate, I won't be a thief. I am sure I did not think it was being a thief just to take a few chestnuts from an old woman, who had such heaps and heaps: but Victoire says it is wrong, and I would not be a thief for all the chestnuts in the world—I'll throw them all into the fire this minute!"

" No; give them back again to the old woman," said Victoire.

" But maybe, she would scold me for having taken them," said Babet; " or who knows but she might whip me?"

" And if she did, could not you bear it?" said Victoire: " I am sure I would rather bear twenty whippings than be a thief."

" Twenty whippings! that's a great many," said Babet; " and I am so little, consider—and that woman has such a monstrous arm!—Now if it was sister Frances, it would be another thing. But come! if you will go with me, Victoire, you shall see how I will behave."

" We will all go with you," said Victoire.

" Yes, all!" said the children; " and sister Frances, I dare say, would go, if you asked her."

Babet ran and told her, and she readily consented to accompany the little penitent to make restitution. The chestnut woman did not whip Babet, nor even scold her; but said she was sure, that since the child was so honest as to return what she had taken, she would never steal again. This was the most *glorious* day of Babet's life, and the happiest. When the circumstance was told to madame de Fleury, she gave the little girl a bag of the best chestnuts the old woman could select, and Babet with great delight shared her reward with her companions.

"But, alas! these chestnuts are not roasted. O! if we could but roast them!" said the children.

Sister Frances placed in the middle of the table, on which the chestnuts were spread, a small earthenware furnace—a delightful toy, commonly used by children in Paris to cook their little feasts.

"This can be bought for sixpence," said she: "and if each of you twelve earn one halfpenny a-piece to-day, you can purchase it to-night, and I will put a little fire into it, and you will then be able to roast your chestnuts."

The children ran eagerly to their work—some to wind worsted for a woman who paid them a *liard* for each ball, others to shell peas for a neighbouring *traiteur*—all rejoicing that they were able to earn *something*. The elder girls, under the directions and with the assistance of sister Frances, completed making, washing, and ironing, half a dozen little caps, to supply a baby-linen warehouse. At the end of the day, when the sum of the produce of their labours was added together, they were surprised to find, that, instead of one, they could purchase two furnaces. They received and enjoyed the reward of their united industry. The success of their first efforts was fixed in their memory: for they were very happy roasting the chestnuts, and they were all (sister Frances inclusive) unanimous in opinion that no chestnuts ever were so good, or so well roasted. Sister Frances always partook in their little innocent amusements; and it was her great delight to be the dispenser of rewards, which at once conferred present pleasure and cherished future virtue.

CHAPTER V.

“ To virtue wake the pulses of the heart,
And bid the tear of emulation start.”

ROGERS.

VICTOIRE, who gave constant exercise to the benevolent feelings of the amiable nun, became every day more dear to her. Far from having the selfishness of a favourite, Victoire loved to bring into public notice the good actions of her companions. “ Stoop down your ear to me, sister Frances,” said she, “ and I will tell you a secret—I will tell you why my friend Annette is growing so thin—I found it out this morning—she does not eat above half her soup every day. Look, there’s her porringer covered up in the corner—she carries it home to her mother, who is sick, and who has not bread to eat.”

Madame de Fleury came in, whilst sister Frances was yet bending down to hear this secret; it was repeated to her; and she immediately ordered that a certain allowance of bread should be given to Annette every day to carry to her mother during her illness.

“ I give it in charge to you, Victoire, to remember this, and I am sure it will never be forgotten. Here is an order for you upon my baker: run and show it to Annette. This is a pleasure you deserve; I am glad that you have chosen for your friend a girl who is so good a daughter. Good daughters make good friends.”

By similar instances of goodness Victoire obtained the love and confidence of her companions, notwithstanding her manifest superiority. In their turn, they were eager to proclaim her merits ; and as sister Frances and madame de Fleury administered justice with invariable impartiality, the hateful passions of envy and jealousy were never excited in this little society. No servile sycophant, no malicious detractor, could rob or defraud their little virtues of their due reward.

“ Whom shall I trust to take this to madame de Fleury ?” said sister Frances, carrying into the garden where the children were playing a pot of fine jonquils, which she had brought from her convent.—“ These are the first jonquils I have seen this year, and finer I never beheld ! Whom shall I trust to take them to madame de Fleury this evening ?—It must be some one who will not stop to stare about on the way, but who will be very, very careful—some one in whom I can place perfect dependence.”

“ It must be Victoire, then,” cried every voice.

“ Yes, she deserves it to-day particularly,” said Annette, eagerly, “ because she was not angry with Babet, when she did what was enough to put any body in a passion. Sister Frances, you know this cherry-tree which you grafted for Victoire last year, and that was yesterday so full of blossoms—now you see, there is not a blossom left !—Babet plucked them all this morning to make a nosegay.”

“ But she did not know,” said Victoire, “ that pulling off the blossoms would prevent my having any cherries.”

“ O, I am very sorry I was so foolish,” said Babet ; “ Victoire did not even say a cross word to me.”

“ Though she was excessively anxious about the

cherries," pursued Annette, "because she intended to have given the first she had to madame de Fleury."

"Victoire, take the jonquils—it is but just," said sister Frances. "How I do love to hear them all praise her!—I knew what she would be from the first."

With a joyful heart Victoire took the jonquils, promised to carry them with the utmost care, and not to stop to stare on the way. She set out to madame de Fleury's hotel, which was in *La Place de Louis Quinze*. It was late in the evening, the lamps were lighting, and as Victoire crossed the Point de Louis Seize, she stopped to look at the reflection of the lamps in the water, which appeared in succession, as they were lighted, spreading as if by magic along the river. While Victoire leaned over the battlements of the bridge, watching the rising of these stars of fire, a sudden push from the elbow of some rude passenger precipitated her pot of jonquils into the Seine. The sound it made in the water was thunder to the ear of Victoire; she stood for an instant vainly hoping it would rise again, but the waters had closed over it for ever.

"Dans cet état affreux, que faire ?
..... Mon devoir."

Victoire courageously proceeded to madame de Fleury's, and desired to see her.

"D'abord c'est impossible—madame is dressing to go to a concert;" said François. "Cannot you leave your message?"

"O no," said Victoire; "it is of great consequence—I must see *her* myself; and she is so good, and you too, monsieur François, that I am sure you will not refuse."

"Well, I remember one day you found the seal of my watch, which I dropped at your school-room door—one good turn deserves another. If it is possible, it shall be done—I will inquire of madame's woman."—"Follow me up stairs," said he, returning in a few minutes; "madame will see you."

She followed him up the large staircase, and through a suite of apartments sufficiently grand to intimidate her young imagination.

"Madame est dans son cabinet. Entrez—mais entrez donc, entrez toujours."

Madame de Fleury was more richly dressed than usual; and her image was reflected in the large looking-glass, so that at the first moment Victoire thought she saw many fine ladies, but not one of them the lady she wanted.

"Well, Victoire, my child, what is the matter?"

"O, it is her voice!—I know you now, madame, and I am not afraid—not afraid even to tell you how foolish I have been. Sister Frances trusted me to carry for you, madame, a beautiful pot of jonquils, and she desired me not to stop on the way to stare; but I did stop to look at the lamps on the bridge, and I forgot the jonquils, and somebody brushed by me, and threw them into the river—and I am very sorry I was so foolish."

"And I am very glad that you are so wise as to tell the truth, without attempting to make any paltry excuses. Go home to sister Frances, and assure her that I am more obliged to her for making you such an honest girl than I could be for a whole bed of jonquils."

Victoire's heart was so full that she could not speak—she kissed madame de Fleury's hand in silence,

and then seemed to be lost in contemplation of her bracelet.

"Are you thinking, Victoire, that you should be much happier, if you had such bracelets as these?—Believe me, you are mistaken if you think so; many people are unhappy, who wear fine bracelets; so, my child, content yourself."

"Myself! O madam, I was not thinking of myself—I was not wishing for bracelets—I was only thinking that——"

"That what?"

"That it is a pity you are so very rich; you have every thing in this world that you want, and I can never be of the least use to *you*—all my life I shall never be able to do *you* any good—and what," said Victoire, turning away to hide her tears, "what signifies the gratitude of such a poor little creature as I am?"

"Did you never hear the fable of the lion and the mouse, Victoire?"

"No, madam—never!"

"Then I will tell it to you."

Victoire looked up with eyes of eager expectation—François opened the door to announce that the marquis de M—— and the comte de S—— were in the saloon; but madame de Fleury staid to tell Victoire her fable—she would not lose the opportunity of making an impression upon this child's heart.

It is whilst the mind is warm that the deepest impressions can be made. Seizing the happy moment sometimes decides the character and the fate of a child. In this respect what advantages have the rich and great in educating the children of the poor! they have the power which their rank, and all its decora-

tions, obtain over the imagination. Their smiles are favours ; their words are listened to as oracular ; they are looked up to as beings of a superior order. Their powers of working good are almost as great, though not quite so wonderful, as those formerly attributed to beneficent fairies.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Knowledge for them unlocks her *useful* page,
And virtue blossoms for a better age.”

BARBAULD.

A FEW days after madame de Fleury had told Victoire the fable of the lion and the mouse, she was informed by sister Frances that Victoire had put the fable into verse. It was wonderfully well done for a child of nine years old, and madame de Fleury was tempted to praise the lines ; but, checking the enthusiasm of the moment, she considered whether it would be advantageous to cultivate her pupil's talents for poetry. Excellence in the poetic art cannot be obtained without a degree of application for which a girl in her situation could not have leisure. To encourage her to become a mere rhyming scribbler, without any chance of obtaining celebrity or securing subsistence, would be folly and cruelty. Early prodigies, in the lower ranks of life, are seldom permanently successful ; they are cried up one day, and cried down the next. Their productions rarely have that superiority which secures a fair preference in the great literary market. Their performances are, perhaps, said to be—*wonderful, all things considered*.

&c. Charitable allowances are made ; the books are purchased by associations of complaisant friends or opulent patrons ; a kind of forced demand is raised, but this can be only temporary and delusive. In spite of bounties and of all the arts of protection, nothing but what is intrinsically good will long be preferred, when it must be purchased. But granting that positive excellence is attained, there is always danger that for works of fancy the taste of the public may suddenly vary ; there is a fashion in these things ; and when the mode changes, the mere literary manufacturer is thrown out of employment ; he is unable to turn his hand to another trade, or to any but his own peculiar branch of the business. The powers of the mind are often partially cultivated in these self-taught geniuses. We often see that one part of their understanding is nourished to the prejudice of the rest—the imagination, for instance, at the expense of the judgment ; so that, whilst they have acquired talents for show, they have none for use. In the affairs of common life, they are utterly ignorant and imbecile—or worse than imbecile. Early called into public notice, probably before their moral habits are formed, they are extolled for some play of fancy or of wit, as Bacon calls it, some *juggler's trick of the intellect* ; immediately they take an aversion to plodding labour, they feel raised above their situation ; *possessed* by the notion that genius exempts them, not only from labour, but from vulgar rules of prudence, they soon disgrace themselves by their conduct, are deserted by their patrons, and sink into despair, or plunge into profligacy*.

Convinced of these melancholy truths, madame de

* To these observations there are honourable exceptions.

The mild fortitude of this innocent, benevolent woman made no impression upon these cruel men. When at night they saw her kneeling at her prayers, they taunted her with gross and impious mockery; and when she sunk to sleep, they would waken her by their loud and drunken orgies: if she remonstrated, they answered, "The enemies of the constitution should have no rest."

Madame de Fleury was not an enemy to any human being; she had never interfered in politics; her life had been passed in domestic pleasures, or employed for the good of her fellow-creatures. Even in this hour of personal danger she thought of others more than of herself: she thought of her husband, an exile in a foreign country, who might be reduced to the utmost distress, now that she was deprived of all means of remitting him money. She thought of her friends, who, she knew, would exert themselves to obtain her liberty, and whose zeal in her cause might involve them and their families in distress. She thought of the good sister Frances, who had been exposed by her means to the unrelenting persecution of the malignant and powerful Tracassier. She thought of her poor little pupils, now thrown upon the world without a protector. Whilst these ideas were revolving in her mind, one night, as she lay awake, she heard the door of her chamber open softly, and a soldier, one of her guards, with a light in his hand, entered: he came to the foot of her bed; and, as she started up, laid his finger upon his lips.

"Don't make the least noise," said he in a whisper; "those without are drunk, and asleep. Don't you know me?—Don't you remember my face?"

"Not in the least; yet I have some recollection of your voice."

The man took off the bonnet-rouge—still she could not guess who he was.—“ You never saw me in an uniform before, nor without a black face.”

She looked again, and recollected the smith, to whom Maurice was bound apprentice, and remembered his *patois* accent.

“ I remember you,” said he, “ at any rate ; and your goodness to that poor girl the day her arm was broken, and all your goodness to Maurice—But I’ve no time for talking of that now—get up, wrap this great coat round you—don’t be in a hurry, but make no noise, and follow me.”

She followed him ; and he led her past the sleeping sentinels, opened a back door into the garden, hurried her, almost carried her, across the garden, to a door at the furthest end of it, which opened into Les Champs Elysées—“ La voilà !” cried he, pushing her through the half-opened door. “ God be praised !” answered a voice, which madame de Fleury knew to be Victoire’s, whose arms were thrown round her with a transport of joy.

“ Softly ; she is not safe yet—wait till we get her home, Victoire,” said another voice, which she knew to be that of Maurice. He produced a dark lantern, and guided madame de Fleury across the Champs Elysées, and across the bridge, and then through various by-streets, in perfect silence, till they arrived safely at the house where Victoire’s mother lodged, and went up those very stairs which she had ascended in such different circumstances several years before. The mother, who was sitting up waiting most anxiously for the return of her children, clasped her hands in an ecstasy, when she saw them return with madame de Fleury.

“ Welcome, madame ! Welcome, dear madame !

but who would have thought of seeing you here, in such a way? Let her rest herself—let her rest; she is quite overcome. Here, miladi, on this poor bed can you sleep?”

“The very same bed you laid me upon the day my arm was broken,” said Victoire.

“Ay, Lord bless her!” said the mother; “and though it’s seven good years ago, it seemed but yesterday that I saw her sitting on that bed, beside my poor child, looking like an angel. But let her rest, let her rest—we’ll not say a word more, only God bless her; thank Heaven, she’s safe with us at last!”

Madame de Fleury expressed unwillingness to stay with these good people, lest she should expose them to danger; but they begged most earnestly that she would remain with them without scruple.

“Surely, madame,” said the mother, “you must think that we have some remembrance of all you have done for us, and some touch of gratitude.”

“And surely, madame, you can trust us, I hope,” said Maurice.

“And surely you are not too proud to let us do something for you. The lion was not too proud to be served by the poor little mouse,” said Victoire. “As to danger for us,” continued she, “there can be none, for Maurice and I have contrived a hiding-place for you, madame, that can never be found out—let them come spying here so often as they please, they will never find her out, will they, Maurice? Look, madame, into this lumber-room—you see it seems to be quite full of wood for firing; well, if you creep in behind, there’s a place behind where you can lie quite snug, and here’s a trap-door into the loft that nobody ever would think of—for we have hung these

old things from the top of it, and who could guess it was a trap-door ! So you see, dear madame, you may sleep in peace here, and never fear for us."

Though but a girl of fourteen, Victoire showed at this time all the sense and prudence of a woman of thirty. Gratitude seemed at once to develope all the powers of her mind. It was she and Maurice who had prevailed upon the smith to effect madame de Fleury's escape from her own house. She had invented, she had foreseen, she had arranged every thing ; she had scarcely rested night or day since the imprisonment of her benefactress ; and now that her exertions had fully succeeded, her joy seemed to raise her above all feeling of fatigue ; she looked as fresh, and moved as briskly, her mother said, as if she was preparing to go to a ball.

" Ah ! my child," said she, " your cousin Manon, who goes to those balls every night, was never so happy as you are this minute."

But Victoire's happiness was not of long continuance ; for the next day they were alarmed by intelligence that Tracassier was enraged beyond measure at madame de Fleury's escape, that all his emissaries were at work to discover her present hiding-place, that the houses of all the parents and relations of her pupils were to be searched, and that the most severe denunciations were issued against all by whom she should be harboured. Manon was the person who gave this intelligence, but not with any benevolent design ; she first came to Victoire, to display her own consequence ; and to terrify her, she related all she knew from a soldier's wife, who was M. Tracassier's mistress. Victoire had sufficient command over herself to conceal from the inquisitive eyes of Manon the agitation of her heart ; she had also the

prudence not to let any one of her companions into her secret, though, when she saw their anxiety, she was much tempted to relieve them, by the assurance that madame de Fleury was in safety. All the day was passed in apprehension. Madame de Fleury never stirred from her place of concealment: as the evening and the hour of the domiciliary visits approached, Victoire and Maurice were alarmed by an unforeseen difficulty. Their mother, whose health had been broken by hard work, in vain endeavoured to suppress her terror at the thoughts of this domiciliary visit; she repeated incessantly that she knew they should all be discovered, and that her children would be dragged to the guillotine before her face. She was in such a distracted state, that they dreaded she would, the moment she saw the soldiers, reveal all she knew.

“If they question me, I shall not know what to answer,” cried the terrified woman. “What can I say?—What can I do?”

Reasoning, entreaties, all were vain; she was not in a condition to understand, or even to listen to, any thing that was said. In this situation they were, when the domiciliary visitors arrived—they heard the noise of the soldiers’ feet on the stairs—the poor woman sprang from the arms of her children; but at the moment the door was opened, and she saw the glittering of the bayonets, she fell at full length in a swoon on the floor—fortunately before she had power to utter a syllable. The people of the house knew, and said, that she was subject to fits on any sudden alarm; so that her being affected in this manner did not appear surprising. They threw her on a bed, whilst they proceeded to search the house: her children staid with her; and, wholly occupied in attending to

her, they were not exposed to the danger of betraying their anxiety about madame de Fleury. They trembled, however, from head to foot, when they heard one of the soldiers swear that all the wood in the lumber-room must be pulled out, and that he would not leave the house till every stick was moved; the sound of each log, as it was thrown out, was heard by Victoire: her brother was now summoned to assist. How great was his terror, when one of the searchers looked up to the roof, as if expecting to find a trap-door! fortunately, however, he did not discover it. Maurice, who had seized the light, contrived to throw the shadows so as to deceive the eye. The soldiers at length retreated; and with inexpressible satisfaction Maurice lighted them down stairs, and saw them fairly out of the house. For some minutes after they were in safety, the terrified mother, who had recovered her senses, could scarcely believe that the danger was over. She embraced her children by turns with wild transport; and with tears begged madame de Fleury to forgive her cowardice, and not to attribute it to ingratitude, or to suspect that she had a bad heart. She protested that she was now become so courageous, since she found that she had gone through this trial successfully, and since she was sure that the hiding-place was really so secure, that she should never be alarmed at any domiciliary visit in future. Madame de Fleury, however, did not think it either just or expedient to put her resolution to the trial. She determined to leave Paris; and, if possible, to make her escape from France. The master of one of the Paris diligences was brother to François, her footman: he was ready to assist her at all hazards, and to convey her safely to Bourdeaux, if she could dis-

guise herself properly ; and if she could obtain a pass from any friend under a feigned name.

Victoire—the indefatigable Victoire—recollected that her friend Annette had an aunt, who was nearly of madame de Fleury's size, who had just obtained a pass to go to Bourdeaux to visit some of her relations. The pass was willingly given up to madame de Fleury ; and upon reading it over it was found to answer tolerably well—the colour of the eyes and hair at least would do ; though the words *un nez gros* were not precisely descriptive of this lady's. Annette's mother, who had always worn the provincial dress of Auvergne, furnished the high *cornette*, stiff stays, boddice, &c. and equipped in these, madame de Fleury was so admirably well disguised, that even Victoire declared she should scarcely have known her. Money, that most necessary passport in all countries, was still wanting : as seals had been put upon all madame de Fleury's effects the day she had been first imprisoned in her own house, she could not save even her jewels. She had, however, one ring on her finger of some value. How to dispose of it without exciting suspicion was the difficulty. Babet, who was resolved to have her share in assisting her benefactress, proposed to carry the ring to a *colporteur*—a pedler, or sort of travelling jeweller, who had come to lay in a stock of hardware at Paris : he was related to one of madame de Fleury's little pupils, and readily disposed of the ring for her : she obtained at least two-thirds of its value—a great deal in those times.

The proofs of integrity, attachment, and gratitude, which she received in these days of peril, from those whom she had obliged in her prosperity, touched her generous heart so much, that she has often since declared she could not regret having been reduced to

distress. Before she quitted Paris, she wrote letters to her friends, recommending her pupils to their protection; she left these letters in the care of Victoire, who to the last moment followed her with anxious affection. She would have followed her benefactress into exile, but that she was prevented by duty and affection from leaving her mother, who was in declining health.

Madame de Fleury successfully made her escape from Paris. Some of the municipal officers in the towns through which she passed on her road were as severe as their ignorance would permit in scrutinising her passport. It seldom happened that more than one of these petty committees of public safety could read. One usually spelled out the passport as well as he could, whilst the others smoked their pipes, and from time to time held a light up to the lady's face, to examine whether it agreed with the description.

“Mais toi! tu n'as pas le nez gros!” said one of her judges to her. “Son nez est assez gros, et c'est moi qui le dit,” said another. The question was put to the vote; and the man who had asserted what was contrary to the evidence of his senses was so vehement in supporting his opinion, that it was carried in spite of all that could be said against it. Madame de Fleury was suffered to proceed on her journey. She reached Bourdeaux in safety. Her husband's friends—the good have always friends in adversity—her husband's friends exerted themselves for her with the most prudent zeal. She was soon provided with a sum of money sufficient for her support for some time in England; and she safely reached that free and happy country, which has been the refuge of so many illustrious exiles.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Così rozzo diamante appena splende
Dalla rupe natia quand' esce fuori
E a poco a poco lucido se rende
Sotto l'attenta che lo lavora.”

MADAME DE FLEURY joined her husband, who was in London; and they both lived in the most retired and frugal manner. They had too much of the pride of independence to become burthensome to their generous English friends. Notwithstanding the variety of difficulties they had to encounter, and the number of daily privations to which they were forced to submit, yet they were happy—in a tranquil conscience, in their mutual affection, and the attachment of many poor but grateful friends. A few months after she came to England, madame de Fleury received, by a private hand, a packet of letters from her little pupils. Each of them, even the youngest, who had but just begun to learn joining-hand, would write a few lines in this packet.

In various hands, of various sizes, the changes were rung upon these simple words:

“ My dear madame de Fleury,

“ I love you—I wish you were here again—I will be *very very* good whilst you are away. If you stay away ever so long, I shall never forget you, nor your goodness; but I hope you will soon be able to come back, and this is what I pray for every night. Sister Frances says I may tell you that I am very good, and Victoire thinks so too.”

This was the substance of several of their little letters. Victoire's contained rather more information:—

“ You will be glad to *learn* that dear sister Frances is safe, and that the good chestnut woman, in whose cellar she took refuge, did not get into any difficulty. After you were gone, Mr. T—— said that he did not think it worth while to pursue her, as it was only you he wanted to humble. Manon, who has, I do not know how, means of knowing, told me this. Sister Frances is now with her abbess, who, as well as every body else that knows her, is very fond of her. What was a convent, is no longer a convent: the nuns are turned out of it. Sister Frances's health is not so good as it used to be, though she never complains; I am sure she suffers much; she has never been the same person since that day when we were driven from our happy school-room. It is all destroyed—the garden and every thing. It is now a dismal sight. Your absence also afflicts sister Frances much, and she is in great anxiety about all of us. She has the six little ones with her every day, in her own apartment, and goes on teaching them, as she used to do. We six eldest go to see her as often as we can. I should have begun, my dear madame de Fleury, by telling you, that, the day after you left Paris, I went to deliver all the letters you were so very kind to write for us in the midst of your hurry. Your friends have been exceedingly good to us, and have placed us all. Rose is with madame la Grace, your mantuamaker, who says she is more handy and more expert at cutting out than girls she has had these three years. Marianne is in the service

of madame de V——, who has lost a great part of her large fortune, and cannot afford to keep her former waiting-maid. Madame de V—— is well pleased with Marianne, and bids me tell you that she thanks you for her. Indeed, Marianne, though she is only fourteen, can do every thing her lady wants. Susanne is with a confectioner; she gave sister Frances a box of *bonbons* of her own making this morning; and sister Frances, who is a judge, says they are excellent; she only wishes you could taste them. Annette and I (thanks to your kindness!) are in the same service, with madame Feuillot the *brodeuse*, to whom you recommended us: she is not discontented with our work, and indeed sent a very civil message yesterday to sister Frances on this subject; but I believe it is too flattering for me to repeat in this letter. We shall do our best to give her satisfaction. She is glad to find that we can write tolerably, and that we can make out bills and keep accounts; this being particularly convenient to her at present, as the young man she had in the shop is become an *orator*, and good for nothing but *la chose publique*: her son, who could have supplied his place, is ill; and madame Feuillot herself, not having had, as she says, the advantage of such a good education as we have been blessed with, writes but badly, and knows nothing of arithmetic. Dear madame de Fleury, how much, how very much we are obliged to you! We feel it every day more and more: in these times, what would have become of us, if we could do nothing useful? Who *would*, who *could* be burdened with us? Dear madame, we owe every thing to you—and we can do nothing, not the least thing, for you!—My mother is still in bad health, and I fear will never recover: Babet is with her always, and sister

Frances is very good to her. My brother Maurice is now so good a workman, that he earns a louis a week. He is very steady to his business, and never goes to the revolutionary meetings, though once he had a great mind to be an orator of the people, but never since the day that you explained to him that he knew nothing about equality and the rights of men, &c. How could I forget to tell you, that his master the smith, who was one of your guards, and who assisted you to escape, has returned without suspicion to his former trade? and he declares that he will never more meddle with public affairs. I gave him the money you left with me for him. He is very kind to my brother—yesterday he mended for Annette's mistress the lock of an English writing-desk, and he mended it so astonishingly well, that an English gentleman, who saw it, could not believe the work was done by a Frenchman; so my brother was sent for, to prove it, and they were forced to believe it. To-day he has more work than he can finish this twelvemonth—all this we owe to you. I shall never forget the day when you promised that you would grant my brother's wish to be apprenticed to this smith, if I was not in a passion for a month—that cured me of being so passionate.

“ Dear madame de Fleury, I have written you too long a letter, and not so well as I can write when I am not in a hurry; but I wanted to tell you every thing at once, because, may be, I shall not for a long time have so safe an opportunity of sending a letter to you.

VICTOIRE.”

Several months elapsed before madame de Fleury received another letter from Victoire: it was short,

and evidently written in great distress of mind. It contained an account of her mother's death. She was now left at the early age of sixteen an orphan. Madame Feuillot the *brodeuse*, with whom she lived, added a few lines to her letter, penned with difficulty and strangely spelled, but expressive of her being highly pleased with both the girls recommended to her by madame de Fleury, especially Victoire, who she said was such a treasure to her, that she would not part with her on any account, and should consider her as a daughter. "I tell her not to grieve so much ; for though she has lost one mother, she has gained another for herself, who will always love her ; and besides, she is so useful, and in so many ways, with her pen and her needle, in accounts, and every thing that is wanted in a family or a shop, she can never want employment or friends in the worst times ; and none can be worse than these, especially for such pretty girls as she is, who have all their heads turned, and are taught to consider nothing a sin that used to be sins. Many gentlemen, who come to our shop, have found out that Victoire is very handsome, and tell her so ; but she is so modest and prudent, that I am not afraid for her. I could tell you, madame, a good anecdote on this subject, but my paper will not allow, and besides my writing is so difficult."

Above a year elapsed before madame de Fleury received another letter from Victoire : this was in a parcel, of which an emigrant took charge : it contained a variety of little offerings from her pupils, instances of their ingenuity, their industry, and their affection : the last thing in the packet was a small purse labelled in this manner—

"Savings from our wages and earnings, for her who taught us all we know."

CHAPTER XII.

“ Dans sa pompe élégante, admirez Chantilly,
De héros en héros, d'âge en âge, embelli.”

DE LILLE.

THE health of the good sister Frances, which had suffered much from the shock her mind received at the commencement of the revolution, declined so rapidly in the course of the two succeeding years, that she was obliged to leave Paris, and she retired to a little village in the neighbourhood of Chantilly. She chose this situation, because here she was within a morning's walk of madame de Fleury's country-seat. The château de Fleury had not yet been seized as national property, nor had it suffered from the attacks of the mob, though it was in a perilous situation, within view of the high road to Paris. The Parisian populace had not yet extended their outrages to this distance from the city ; and the poor people who lived on the estate of Fleury, attached from habit, principle, and gratitude to their lord, were not disposed to take advantage of the disorder of the times, to injure the property of those from whom they had all their lives received favours and protection. A faithful old steward had the care of the castle and the grounds. Sister Frances was impatient to talk to him, and to visit the castle, which she had never seen ; but for some days after her arrival in the village, she was so much fatigued and so weak, that she could not attempt so long a walk. Victoire had obtained permission from her mistress to accompany the nun for a few days to the country, as Annette undertook to

do all the business of the shop during the absence of her companion. Victoire was fully as eager as sister Frances to see the faithful steward and the château de Fleury, and the morning was now fixed for their walk: but in the middle of the night they were wakened by the shouts of a mob, who had just entered the village fresh from the destruction of a neighbouring castle. The nun and Victoire listened; but in the midst of the horrid yells of joy, no human voice, no intelligible word, could be distinguished: they looked through a chink in the window-shutter, and they saw the street below filled with a crowd of men, whose countenances were by turns illuminated by the glare of the torches which they brandished.

“Good Heavens!” whispered the nun to Victoire; “I should know the face of that man who is loading his musket—the very man whom I nursed ten years ago, when he was dying of a jail fever!”

This man, who stood in the midst of the crowd, taller by the head than the others, seemed to be the leader of the party: they were disputing whether they should proceed further, spend the remainder of the night in the village alehouse, or return to Paris. Their leader ordered spirits to be distributed to his associates, and exhorted them in a loud voice to proceed in their glorious work. Tossing his firebrand over his head, he declared that he would never return to Paris till he had razed to the ground the château de Fleury. At these words, Victoire, forgetful of all personal danger, ran out into the midst of the mob, pressed her way up to the leader of these ruffians, caught him by the arm, exclaiming, “You will not touch a stone in the château de Fleury—I have my reasons—I say you will not suffer a stone in the château de Fleury to be touched.”

"And why not?" cried the man, turning astonished; "and who are you, that I should listen to you?"

"No matter who I am," said Victoire; "follow me, and I will show you one to whom you will not refuse to listen. Here!—here she is," continued Victoire, pointing to the nun, who had followed her in amazement; "here is one to whom you will listen—yes, look at her well: hold the light to her face."

The nun, in a supplicating attitude, stood in speechless expectation.

"Ay, I see you have gratitude, I know you will have mercy," cried Victoire, watching the workings in the countenance of the man: "you will save the château de Fleury, for her sake—who saved your life."

"I will," cried this astonished chief of a mob, fired with sudden generosity: "By my faith you are a brave girl, and a fine girl, and know how to speak to the heart, and in the right moment. Friends, citizens! this nun, though she is a nun, she is good for something. When I lay dying of a fever, and not a soul else to help me, she came and gave me medicines and food—in short, I owe my life to her. 'Tis ten years ago, but I remember it well; and now it is our turn to rule, and she shall be paid as she deserves. Not a stone of the château de Fleury shall be touched!"

With loud acclamations, the mob joined in the generous enthusiasm of the moment, and followed their leader peaceably out of the village. All this passed with such rapidity as scarcely to leave the impression of reality upon the mind. As soon as the sun rose in the morning, Victoire looked out for the turrets of the château de Fleury, and she saw that

they were safe—safe in the midst of the surrounding devastations. Nothing remained of the superb palace of Chantilly but the white arches of its foundation!

CHAPTER XIII.

“ When thy last breath, ere nature sunk to rest,
Thy meek submission to thy God express'd ;
When thy last look, ere thought and feeling fled,
A mingled gleam of hope and triumph shed,
What to thy soul its glad assurance gave—
Its hope in death, its triumph o'er the grave :
The sweet remembrance of unblemish'd youth,
Th' inspiring voice of innocence and truth !”

ROGERS.

THE good sister Frances, though she had scarcely recovered from the shock of the preceding night, accompanied Victoire to the Château de Fleury. The gates were opened for them by the old steward and his son Basile, who welcomed them with all the eagerness with which people welcome friends in time of adversity. The old man showed them the place ; and through every apartment of the castle went on, talking of former times, and with narrative fondness told anecdotes of his dear master and mistress. Here his lady used to sit and read—here was the table at which she wrote—this was the sofa on which she and the ladies sat the very last day she was at the castle, at the open windows of the hall, whilst all the tenants and people of the village were dancing on the green.

VOL. VIII.

F

"Ay, those were happy times," said the old man; "but they will never return."

"Never! O do not say so," cried Victoire.

"Never during my life, at least," said the nun in a low voice, and with a look of resignation.

Basile, as he wiped the tears from his eyes, happened to strike his arm against the chords of madame de Fleury's harp, and the sound echoed through the room.

"Before this year is at an end," cried Victoire, "perhaps that harp will be struck again in this castle by madame de Fleury herself. Last night we could hardly have hoped to see these walls standing this morning, and yet it is safe—not a stone touched! O we shall all live, I hope, to see better times!"

Sister Frances smiled, for she would not depress Victoire's enthusiastic hope: to please her, the good nun added, that she felt better this morning than she had felt for months, and Victoire was happier than she had been since madame de Fleury left France. But, alas! it was only a transient gleam. Sister Frances relapsed, and declined so rapidly, that even Victoire, whose mind was almost always disposed to hope, despaired of her recovery. With placid resignation, or rather with mild confidence, this innocent and benevolent creature met the approach of death. She seemed attached to earth only by affection for those whom she was to leave in this world. Two of the youngest of the children which had formerly been placed under her care, and who were not yet able to earn their own subsistence, she kept with her, and in the last days of her life she continued her instructions to them with the fond solicitude of a parent. Her father confessor, an excellent man, who never even in these

dangerous times shrunk from his duty, came to attend sister Frances in her last moments, and relieved her mind from all anxiety, by promising to place the two little children with the lady who had been abbess of her convent, who would to the utmost of her power protect and provide for them suitably. Satisfied by this promise, the good sister Frances smiled upon Victoire, who stood beside her bed, and with that smile upon her countenance expired.—It was some time before the little children seemed to comprehend, or to believe, that sister Frances was dead: they had never before seen any one die; they had no idea what it was to die, and their first feeling was astonishment: they did not seem to understand why Victoire wept. But the next day, when no sister Frances spoke to them, when every hour they missed some accustomed kindness from her; when presently they saw the preparations for her funeral; when they heard that she was to be buried in the earth, and that they should never see her more, they could neither play nor eat, but sat in a corner holding each other's hands, and watching every thing that was done for the dead by Victoire.

In those times the funeral of a nun with a priest attending would not have been permitted by the populace. It was therefore performed as secretly as possible: in the middle of the night the coffin was carried to the burial-place of the Fleury family; the old steward, his son Basile, Victoire, and the good father confessor, were the only persons present. It is necessary to mention this, because the facts were afterwards misrepresented.

CHAPTER XIV.

“The character is lost!—

Her head adorn'd with lappets, pinn'd aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains.”

COWPER.

UPON her return to Paris, Victoire felt melancholy; but she exerted herself as much as possible in her usual occupation; finding that employment and the consciousness of doing her duty were the best remedies for sorrow.

One day as she was busy settling madame Feuillot's accounts, a servant came into the shop, and inquired for mademoiselle Victoire: he presented her a note, which she found rather difficult to decipher. It was signed by her cousin Manon, who desired to see Victoire at her hotel. “*Her hotel!*” repeated Victoire with astonishment. The servant assured her that one of the finest hotels in Paris belonged to his lady, and that he was commissioned to show her the way to it. Victoire found her cousin in a magnificent house, which had formerly belonged to the prince de Salms. Manon, dressed in the disgusting, indecent extreme of the mode, was seated under a richly-fringed canopy. She burst into a loud laugh as Victoire entered.

“You look just as much astonished as I expected,” cried she. “Great changes have happened since I saw you last—I always told you, Victoire, I knew the world better than you did. What has come of

all your schooling, and your mighty goodness, and your gratitude truly?—Your patroness is banished and a beggar, and you a drudge in the shop of a *brodeuse*, who makes you work your fingers to the bone, no doubt.—Now you shall see the difference. Let me show you my house; you know it was formerly the hotel of the prince de Salms, he that was guillotined the other day; but you know nothing, for you have been out of Paris this month, I understand. Then I must tell you, that my friend Villeneuve has acquired an immense fortune! by assignats, made in the course of a fortnight—I say an immense fortune! and has bought this fine house—Now do you begin to understand?”

“I do not clearly know whom you mean by your friend Villeneuve,” said Victoire.

“The hairdresser, who lived in our street,” said Manon; “he became a great patriot, you know, and orator; and what with his eloquence, and his luck in dealing in assignats, he has made his fortune and mine.”

“And yours! then he is your husband!”

“That does not follow—that is not necessary—but do not look so shocked—every body goes on the same way now; besides, I had no other resource—I must have starved—I could not earn my bread as you do. Besides, I was too delicate for hard work of any sort—and besides—but come, let me show you my house—you have no idea how fine it is.”

With anxious ostentation Manon displayed all her riches, to excite Victoire’s envy.

“Confess, Victoire,” said she at last, “that you think me the happiest person you have ever known.—You do not answer; whom did you ever know that was happier?”

“ Sister Frances, who died last week, appeared to be much happier,” said Victoire.

“ The poor nun !” said Manon, disdainfully. “ Well, and whom do you think the next happiest ?”

“ Madame de Fleury.”

“ An exile and a beggar !—O ! you are jesting now, Victoire—or—envious. With that sanctified face, citoyenne (perhaps I should say mademoiselle) Victoire, you would be delighted to change places with me this instant. Come, you shall stay with me a week to try how you like it.”

“ Excuse me,” said Victoire, firmly ; “ I cannot stay with you, Manon—you have chosen one way of life, and I another—quite another. I do not repent my choice—may you never repent yours !—Farewell !”

“ Bless me ! what airs ! and with what dignity she looks ! Repent of my choice !—a likely thing, truly. Am not I at the top of the wheel ?”

“ And may not the wheel turn ?” said Victoire.

“ Perhaps it may,” said Manon ; “ but till it does, I will enjoy myself. Since you are of a different humour, return to madame Feuillot, and *figure* upon cambric and muslin, and make out bills, and nurse old nuns, all the days of your life. You will never persuade me, however, that you would not change places with me if you could. Stay till you are tried, mademoiselle Victoire. Who was ever in love with you, or your virtues ?—Stay till you are tried.”

CHAPTER XV.

"But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree,
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, or defend her fruit."

MILTON.

THE trial was nearer than either Manon or Victoire expected. Manon had scarcely pronounced the last words, when the ci-devant hairdresser burst into the room, accompanied by several of his political associates, who met to consult measures for the good of the nation. Among these patriots was the abbé Tracassier.

"Who is that pretty girl who is with you, Manon?" whispered he; "a friend of yours, I hope?"

Victoire left the room immediately, but not before the profligate abbé had seen enough to make him wish to see more. The next day he went to madame Feuillot's, under pretence of buying some embroidered handkerchiefs; he paid Victoire a profusion of extravagant compliments, which made no impression upon her innocent heart, and which appeared ridiculous to her plain good sense. She did not know who he was, nor did madame Feuillot; for though she had often heard of the abbé, yet she had never seen him. Several succeeding days he returned, and addressed himself to Victoire, each time with increasing freedom. Madame Feuillot, who had the greatest confidence in her, left her entirely to her own discretion. Victoire begged her friend Annette

to do the business of the shop, and staid at work in the back parlour. Tracassier was much disappointed by her absence; but as he thought no great ceremony necessary in his proceedings, he made his name known in a haughty manner to madame de Feuillot, and desired that he might be admitted into the back parlour, as he had something of consequence to say to mademoiselle Victoire in private. Our readers will not require to have a detailed account of this tête-à-tête; it is sufficient to say, that the disappointed and exasperated abbé left the house muttering imprecations. The next morning a note came to Victoire, apparently from Manon: it was directed by her, but the inside was written by an unknown hand, and contained these words:—

“ You are a charming but incomprehensible girl—since you do not like compliments, you shall not be addressed with empty flattery. It is in the power of the person who dictates this, not only to make you as rich and great as your cousin Manon, but also to restore to fortune and to their country the friends for whom you are most interested. Their fate as well as your own is in your power—if you send a favourable answer to this note, the persons alluded to will, tomorrow, be struck from the list of emigrants, and reinstated in their former possessions. If your answer is decidedly unfavourable, the return of your friends to France will be thenceforward impracticable, and their château, as well as their house in Paris, will be declared national property, and sold without delay to the highest bidder. To you, who have as much understanding as beauty, it is unnecessary to say more. Consult your heart, charming Victoire! be happy,

and make others happy. This moment is decisive of your fate and of theirs, for you have to answer a man of a most decided character."

Victoire's answer was as follows:—

"My friends would not, I am sure, accept of their fortune, or consent to return to their country, upon the conditions proposed; therefore I have no merit in rejecting them."

Victoire had early acquired good principles, and that plain, steady, good sense, which goes straight to its object, without being dazzled or imposed upon by sophistry. She was unacquainted with the refinements of sentiment, but she distinctly knew right from wrong, and had sufficient resolution to abide by the right. Perhaps many romantic heroines might have thought it a generous self-devotion to have become in similar circumstances the mistress of Tracassier; and those who are skilled "to make the worse appear the better cause" might have made such an act of heroism the foundation of an interesting or at least a fashionable novel. Poor Victoire had not received an education sufficiently refined to enable her to understand these mysteries of sentiment. She was even simple enough to flatter herself that this libertine patriot would not fulfil his threats, and that these had been made only with a view to terrify her into compliance. In this opinion, however, she found herself mistaken. M. Tracassier was indeed a man of the most decided character, if this term may properly be applied to those who act uniformly in consequence of their ruling passion. The château de Fleury was seized as national pro-

perty. Victoire heard this bad news from the old steward, who was turned out of the castle along with his son, the very day after her rejection of the proposed conditions.

“ I could not have believed that any human creature could be so wicked !” exclaimed Victoire, glowing with indignation : but indignation gave way to sorrow.

“ And the château de Fleury is really seized ?—and you, good old man, are turned out of the place where you were born ?—and you, too, Basile ?—and madame de Fleury will never come back again !—and perhaps she may be put into prison in a foreign country, and may die for want—and I might have prevented all this !”

Unable to shed a tear, Victoire stood in silent consternation, whilst Annette explained to the good steward and his son the whole transaction. Basile, who was naturally of an impetuous temper, was so transported with indignation, that he would have gone instantly with the note from Tracassier to *denounce* him before the whole national convention, if he had not been restrained by his more prudent father. The old steward represented to him, that as the note was neither signed nor written by the hand of Tracassier, no proof could be brought home to him, and the attempt to convict one of so powerful a party would only bring certain destruction upon the accusers. Besides, such was at this time the general depravity of manners, that numbers would keep the guilty in countenance. There was no crime which the mask of patriotism could not cover.

“ There is one comfort we have in our misfortunes, which these men can never have,” said the old man ;

“when their downfall comes, and come it will most certainly, they will not feel as we do, INNOCENT. Victoire, look up! and do not give way to despair—all will yet be well.”

“At all events, you have done what is right, so do not reproach yourself,” said Basile. “Every body—I mean every body who is good for any thing—must respect, admire, and love you, Victoire.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“Ne mal cio che v'annoia ;
Quello e vero gioire
Che nasce da virtue dopo il soffrire.”

BASILE had not seen without emotion the various instances of goodness which Victoire showed during the illness of sister Frances. Her conduct towards M. Tracassier increased his esteem and attachment ; but he forbore to declare his affection, because he could not, consistently with prudence, or with gratitude to his father, think of marrying, now that he was not able to maintain a wife and family. The honest earnings of many years of service had been wrested from the old steward at the time the château de Fleury was seized, and he now depended on the industry of his son for the daily support of his age. His dependence was just, and not likely to be disappointed ; for he had given his son an education suitable to his condition in life. Basile was an exact arithmetician, could write an excellent hand, and was a ready draughtsman and surveyor. To bring these useful talents into action, and to find employ-

ment for them, with men by whom they would be honestly rewarded, was the only difficulty—a difficulty which Victoire's brother Maurice soon removed. His reputation as a smith had introduced him, among his many customers, to a gentleman of worth and scientific knowledge, who was at this time employed to make models and plans of all the fortified places in Europe; he was in want of a good clerk and draughtsman, of whose integrity he could be secure. Maurice mentioned his friend Basile; and upon inquiry into his character, and upon trial of his abilities, he was found suited to the place, and was accepted. By his well-earned salary, he supported himself and his father; and began, with the sanguine hopes of a young man, to flatter himself that he should soon be rich enough to marry, and that then he might declare his attachment to Victoire. Notwithstanding all his boasted prudence, he had betrayed sufficient symptoms of his passion to have rendered a declaration unnecessary to any clear-sighted observer; but Victoire was not thinking of conquests, she was wholly occupied with a scheme of earning a certain sum of money for her benefactress, who was now, as she feared, in want. All madame de Fleury's former pupils contributed their share to the common stock; and the mantuamaker, the confectioner, the servants of different sorts, who had been educated at her school, had laid by, during the years of her banishment, an annual portion of their wages and savings: with the sum which Victoire now added to the fund, it amounted to ten thousand livres. The person who undertook to carry this money to madame de Fleury was François, her former footman, who had procured a pass to go to England as a hairdresser. The night before he set out was

a happy night for Victoire, as all her companions met, by madame Feuillot's invitation, at her house ; and after tea they had the pleasure of packing up the little box in which each, beside the money, sent some token of their gratitude, and some proof of their ingenuity. They would with all their hearts have sent twice as many *souvenirs* as François could carry.

"D'abord c'est impossible!" cried he, when he saw the box that was prepared for him to carry to England: but his good-nature was unable to resist the entreaties of each to have her offering carried, "which would take up no room."

He departed—arrived safe in England—found out madame de Fleury, who was in real distress, in obscure lodgings at Richmond. He delivered the money, and all the presents of which he had taken charge: but the person to whom she trusted a letter, in answer to Victoire, was not so punctual, or was more unlucky ; for the letter never reached her, and she and her companions were long uncertain whether their little treasure had been received. They still continued, however, with indefatigable gratitude, to lay by a portion of their earnings for their benefactress ; and the pleasure they had in this perseverance made them more than amends for the loss of the little amusements and privations to which they submitted in consequence of their resolution.

In the mean time Basile, going on steadily with his employments, advanced every day in the favour of his master, and his salary was increased in proportion to his abilities and industry ; so that he thought he could now, without any imprudence, marry. He consulted his father, who approved of his choice ; he consulted Maurice as to the probability of his being accepted by Victoire ; and encouraged

by both his father and his friend, he was upon the eve of addressing himself to Victoire, when he was prevented by a new and unforeseen misfortune. His father was taken up, by an emissary of Tracassier's, and brought before one of their revolutionary committees, where he was accused of various acts of incivisme. Among other things equally criminal, it was proved, that one Sunday, when he went to see *La petite Trianon*, then a public-house, he exclaimed, "C'est ici que la canaille danse, et que les honnêtes gens pleurent!"

Basile was present at this mock examination of his father—he saw him on the point of being dragged to prison—when a hint was given that he might save his father by enlisting immediately, and going with the army out of France. Victoire was full in Basile's recollection—but there was no other means of saving his father. He enlisted, and in twenty-four hours left Paris.

What appear to be the most unfortunate circumstances of life often prove ultimately the most advantageous. Indeed, those who have knowledge, activity, and integrity can convert the apparent blanks in the lottery of fortune into prizes. Basile was recommended to his commanding officer by the gentleman who had lately employed him as a clerk—his skill in drawing plans, and in taking rapid surveys of the countries through which they passed, was extremely useful to his general; and his integrity made it safe to trust him as a secretary. His commanding officer, though a brave man, was illiterate, and a secretary was to him a necessary of life. Basile was not only useful, but agreeable; without any mean arts or servile adulation, he pleased; by simply showing the desire to oblige, and the ability to serve.

"Diable!" exclaimed the general one day, as he looked at Basile's plan of a town, which the army was besieging, "How comes it that you are able to do all these things? But you have a genius for this sort of work, apparently."

"No, sir," said Basile, "these things were taught to me, when I was a child, by a good friend."

"A good friend he was indeed! He did more for you than if he had given you a fortune; for, in these times, that might have been soon taken from you; but now you have the means of making a fortune for yourself."

This observation of the general's, obvious as it may seem, is deserving of the serious consideration of those who have children of their own to educate, or who have the disposal of money for public charities. In these times, no sensible person will venture to pronounce that a change of fortune and station may not await the highest and the lowest; whether we rise or fall in the scale of society, personal qualities and knowledge will be valuable. Those who fall, cannot be destitute; and those who rise, cannot be ridiculous or contemptible, if they have been prepared for their fortune by proper education. In shipwreck, those who carry their all in their minds are the most secure.

But to return to Basile. He had sense enough not to make his general jealous of him by any unseasonable display of his talents, or any officious intrusion of advice, even upon subjects which he best understood.

The talents of the warrior and the secretary were in such different lines, that there was no danger of competition; and the general, finding in his secretary the soul of all the arts, good sense, gradually acquired

the habit of asking his opinion on every subject that came within his department. It happened that the general received orders from the Directory, at Paris, to take a certain town, let it cost what it would, within a given time: in his perplexity, he exclaimed before Basile against the unreasonableness of these orders, and declared his belief that it was impossible he should succeed, and that this was only a scheme of his enemies to prepare his ruin. Basile had attended to the operations of the engineer who acted under the general, and perfectly recollected the model of the mines of this town, which he had seen when he was employed as draughtsman by his Parisian friend. He remembered, that there was formerly an old mine, that had been stopped up somewhere near the place where the engineer was at work; he mentioned *in private* his suspicions to the general, who gave orders in consequence; the old mine was discovered, cleared out, and by these means the town was taken the day before the time appointed. Basile did not arrogate to himself any of the glory of this success—he kept his general's secret and his confidence. Upon their return to Paris, after a fortunate campaign, the general was more grateful than some others have been, perhaps because more room was given by Basile's prudence for the exercise of this virtue.

“ My friend,” said he to Basile, “ you have done me a great service by your counsel, and a greater still by holding your tongue. Speak now, and tell me freely, if there is any thing I can do for you. You see, as a victorious general, I have the upper hand amongst these fellows—Tracassier's scheme to ruin me missed—whatever I ask will at this moment be granted; speak freely, therefore.”

Basile asked what he knew Victoire most desired—that M. and madame de Fleury should be struck from the list of emigrants, and that their property now in the hands of the nation should be restored to them. The general promised that this should be done. A warm contest ensued upon the subject between him and Tracassier; but the general stood firm; and Tracassier, enraged, forgot his usual cunning, and quarrelling irrevocably with a party, now more powerful than his own, he and his adherents were driven from that station in which they had so long tyrannized. From being the rulers of France, they in a few hours became banished men, or, in the phrase of the times, *des déportés*.

We must not omit to mention the wretched end of Manon. The man with whom she lived perished by the guillotine. From his splendid house she went upon the stage—did not succeed—sunk from one degree of profligacy to another; and at last died in an hospital.

In the mean time, the order for the restoration of the Fleury property, and for permission for the Fleury family to return to France, was made out in due form, and Maurice begged to be the messenger of these good tidings:—he set out for England with the order.

Victoire immediately went down to the château de Fleury, to get every thing in readiness for the reception of the family.

Exiles are expeditious in their return to their native country. Victoire had but just time to complete her preparations, when M. and madame de Fleury arrived at Calais. Victoire had assembled all her companions, all madame de Fleury's former pupils; and the hour when she was expected home,

they with the peasants of the neighbourhood were all in their holiday clothes, and according to the custom of the country singing and dancing. Without music and dancing there is no perfect joy in France. Never was *fête du village* or *fête de Seigneur* more joyful than this.

The old steward opened the gate—the carriage drove in. Madame de Fleury saw that home, which she had little expected ever more to behold; but all other thoughts were lost in the pleasure of meeting her beloved pupils.

“My children!” cried she, as they crowded round her the moment she got out of her carriage—“My dear *good* children!”

It was all she could say. She leaned on Victoire’s arm as she went into the house, and by degrees recovering from the almost painful excess of pleasure, began to enjoy what she yet only confusedly felt.

Several of her pupils were so much grown and altered in their external appearance, that she could scarcely recollect them till they spoke, and then their voices and the expression of their countenances brought their childhood fully to her memory. Victoire, she thought, was changed the least, and at this she rejoiced.

The feeling and intelligent reader will imagine all the pleasure that madame de Fleury enjoyed this day; nor was it merely the pleasure of a day. She heard from all her friends, with prolonged satisfaction, repeated accounts of the good conduct of these young people during her absence. She learned with delight how her restoration to her country and her fortune had been effected; and is it necessary to add, that Victoire consented to marry Basile, and that she was suitably portioned, and, what is better still, that

she was perfectly happy?—M. de Fleury rewarded the attachment and good conduct of Maurice, by taking him into his service; and making him his manager under the old steward at the château de Fleury.

On Victoire's wedding-day, madame de Fleury produced all the little offerings of gratitude which she had received from her and her companions during her exile. It was now her turn to confer favours, and she knew how to confer them, both with grace and judgment.

“No gratitude in human nature! No gratitude in the lower classes of the people!” cried she: “How much those are mistaken who think so! I wish they could know my history and the history of these *my children*, and they would acknowledge their error.”

Edgeworthstown, 1805.

THE DUN.

“ Horrible monster ! hated by gods and men.”
PHILLIPS.

THE DUN.

IN the higher and middle classes of society," says a celebrated writer, "it is a melancholy and distressing sight to observe, not unfrequently, a man of a noble and ingenuous disposition, once feelingly alive to a sense of honour and integrity, gradually sinking under the pressure of his circumstances, making his excuses at first with a blush of conscious shame, afraid to see the faces of his friends from whom he may have borrowed money, reduced to the meanest tricks and subterfuges to delay or avoid the payment of his just debts, till, ultimately grown familiar with falsehood, and at enmity with the world, he loses all the grace and dignity of man."

Colonel Pembroke, the subject of the following story, had not, at the time his biographer first became acquainted with him, "grown familiar with falsehood;" his conscience was not entirely callous to reproach, nor was his heart insensible to compassion; but he was in a fair way to get rid of all troublesome feelings and principles. He was connected with a set of selfish young men of fashion, whose opinions stood him instead of law, equity, and morality; to them he appealed in all doubtful cases, and his self-complacency being daily and hourly dependent upon

their decisions, he had seldom either leisure or inclination to consult his own judgment. His amusements and his expenses were consequently regulated by the example of his companions, not by his own choice. To follow them in every absurd variety of the mode, either in dress or equipage, was his first ambition; and all their factitious wants appeared to him objects of the first necessity. No matter how good the boots, the hat, the coat, the furniture, or the equipage might be, if they had outlived the fashion of the day, or even of the hour, they were absolutely worthless in his eyes. *Nobody* could be seen in such things—then of what use could they be to *any body*? Colonel Pembroke's finances were not exactly equal to the support of such *liberal* principles; but this was a misfortune which he had in common with several of his companions. It was no check to their spirit—they could live upon credit—credit, “that talisman, which realizes every thing it imagines, and which can imagine every thing*.” Without staying to reflect upon the immediate or remote consequences of this system, Pembroke, in his first attempts, found it easy to reduce it to practice: but, as he proceeded, he experienced some difficulties. Tradesmen's bills accumulated, and applications for payment became every day more frequent and pressing. He defended himself with much address and ingenuity, and practice perfected him in all the Fabian arts of delay. “*No faith with duns*” became, as he frankly declared, a maxim of his morality. He could now, with a most plausible face, protest to a *poor devil*, upon the honour of a gentleman, that he should be paid to-morrow; when nothing was further from his intentions or his

* See Des Casaux sur le Mécanisme de Société.

power than to keep his word: and when *to-morrow* came, he could with the most easy assurance *damn the rascal* for putting a gentleman in mind of his promises. But there were persons more difficult to manage than *poor devils*. Colonel Pembroke's tailor, who had begun by being the most accommodating fellow in the world, and who had in three years run him up a bill of thirteen hundred pounds, at length began to fail in complaisance, and had the impertinence to talk of his large family, and his urgent calls for money, &c. And next, the colonel's shoe and boot-maker, a man from whom he had been in the habit of taking two hundred pounds-worth of shoes and boots every year, for himself and his servants, now pretended to be in distress for ready money, and refused to furnish more goods upon credit. "Ungrateful dog!" Pembroke called him; and he actually believed his creditors to be ungrateful and insolent, when they asked for their money; for men frequently learn to believe what they are in the daily habit of asserting*, especially if their assertions be not contradicted by their audience. He knew that his tradesmen overcharged him in every article he bought, and therefore he thought it but just to delay payment whilst it suited his convenience. "Confound them, they can very well afford to wait!" As to their pleas of urgent demands for ready money, large families, &c., he considered these merely as words of course, tradesmen's cant, which should make no more impression upon a gentleman than the whining of a beggar.

One day when Pembroke was just going out to ride with some of his gay companions, he was stopped at his own door by a pale, thin, miserable-looking

* Rochefoucault.

boy, of eight or nine years old, who presented him with a paper, which he took for granted was a petition; he threw the child half-a-crown. "There, take that," said he, "and stand out of the way of my horse's heels, I advise you, my little fellow."

The boy, however, still pressed closer; and without picking up the half-crown, held the paper to colonel Pembroke, who had now vaulted into his saddle.

"O no! no! That's too much, my lad—I never read petitions—I'd sooner give half-a-crown at any time than read a petition."

"But, sir, this is not a petition——indeed, sir, I am not a beggar."

"What is it then?—Heyday! a bill!—Then you're worse than a beggar—a dun!—a dun! in the public streets, at your time of life! You little rascal, why what will you come to before you are your father's age?" The boy sighed. "If," pursued the colonel, "I were to serve you right, I should give you a good horse-whipping. Do you see this whip?"

"I do, sir," said the boy; "but——"

"But what? you insolent little dun!—But what?"

"My father is dying," said the child, bursting into tears, "and we have no money to buy him bread, or any thing."

Struck by these words, Pembroke snatched the paper from the boy, and looking hastily at the total and title of the bill, read—"Twelve pounds, fourteen—John White, weaver."—"I know of no such person!—I have no dealings with weavers, child," said the colonel, laughing: "My name's Pembroke—Colonel Pembroke."

"Colonel Pembroke—yes, sir, the very person Mr. Close the tailor sent me to!"

"Close the tailor! D—n the rascal: was it he sent you to dun me? for this trick he shall not see a farthing of my money this twelvemonth. You may tell him so, you little whining hypocrite!—And, hark you! the next time you come to me, take care to come with a better story—let your father and mother and six brothers and sisters be all lying ill of the fever—do you understand?"

He tore the bill into bits as he spoke, and showered it over the boy's head. Pembroke's companions laughed at this operation, and he facetiously called it "powdering a dun." They rode off to the Park in high spirits; and the poor boy picked up the half-crown, and returned home. His home was in a lane in Moorfields, about three miles distant from this gay part of the town. As the child had not eaten any thing that morning, he was feeble, and grew faint as he was crossing Covent Garden. He sat down upon the corner of a stage of flowers.

"What are you doing there?" cried a surly man, pulling him up by the arm; "What business have you lounging and loitering here, breaking my best balsam?"

"I did not mean to do any harm—I am not loitering, indeed, sir,—I'm only weak," said the boy, "and hungry."

"Oranges! oranges! fine china oranges!" cried a woman, rolling her barrow full of fine fruit towards him. "If you've a two-pence in the world, you can't do better than take one of these fine ripe china oranges."

"I have not two-pence of my own in the world," said the boy.

"What's that I see through the hole in your waistcoat pocket?" said the woman; "is not that silver?"

"Yes, half-a-crown; which I am carrying home to my father, who is ill, and wants it more than I do."

"Pooh! take an orange out of it—it's only two-pence—and it will do you good—I'm sure you look as if you wanted it badly enough."

"That may be; but father wants it worse—No, I won't change my half-crown," said the boy, turning away from the tempting oranges.

The gruff gardener caught him by the hand.

"Here, I've moved the balsam a bit, and it is not broke, I see; sit ye down, child, and rest yourself, and eat this," said he, putting into his hand half a ripe orange, which he had just cut.

"Thank you!—God bless you, sir!—How good it is—But," said the child, stopping after he had tasted the sweet juice, "I am sorry I have sucked so much; I might have carried it home to father, who is ill; and what a treat it would be to him!—I'll keep the rest."

"No—that you sha'n't," said the orange-woman. "But I'll tell you what you shall do—take this home to your father, which is a better one by half—I'm sure it will do him good—I never knew a ripe china orange do harm to man, woman, or child."

The boy thanked the good woman and the gardener, as only those can thank who have felt what it is to be in absolute want. When he was rested, and able to walk, he pursued his way home. His mother was watching for him at the street-door.

"Well, John, my dear, what news? Has he paid us?"

The boy shook his head.

"Then we must bear it as well as we can," said his mother, wiping the cold dew from her forehead.

"But look, mother, I have this half-crown, which the gentleman, thinking me a beggar, threw to me."

"Run with it, love, to the baker's.—No—stay, you're tired—I'll go myself; and do you step up to your father, and tell him the bread is coming in a minute."

"Don't run, for you're not able, mother; don't hurry so," said the boy, calling after her, and holding up his orange: "See, I have this for father whilst you are away."

He clambered up three flights of dark, narrow, broken stairs, to the room in which his father lay. The door hung by a single hinge, and the child had scarcely strength enough to raise it out of the hollow in the decayed floor into which it had sunk. He pushed it open, with as little noise as possible, just far enough to creep in.

Let those forbear to follow him whose fine feelings can be moved only by romantic elegant scenes of distress, whose delicate sensibility shrinks from the revolting sight of real misery. Here are no pictures for romance, no stage effect to be seen, no poetic language to be heard—nothing to charm the imagination—every thing to disgust the senses.

This room was so dark, that upon first going into it, after having been in broad daylight, you could scarcely distinguish any one object it contained—and no one used to breathe a pure atmosphere, could probably have endured to remain many minutes in this garret. There were three beds in it—one on which the sick man lay: divided from it by a tattered rug was another, for his wife and daughter; and a third for his little boy in the furthest corner. Underneath the window was fixed a loom, at which the poor weaver had worked hard many a day and year—too

hard, indeed—even till the very hour he was taken ill. His shuttle now lay idle upon the frame. A girl of about sixteen—his daughter—was sitting at the foot of his bed, finishing some plain-work.

“O Anne! how your face is all flushed!” said her little brother, as she looked up when he came into the room.

“Have you brought us any money?” whispered she: “don’t say *No* loud, for fear father should hear you.”

The boy told her in a low voice all that had passed.

“Speak out, my dear, I’m not asleep,” said his father. “So you are come back as you went?”

“No, father, not quite——there’s bread coming for you.”

“Give me some more water, Anne, for my mouth is quite parched.”

The little boy cut his orange in an instant, and gave a piece of it to his father, telling him at the same time how he came by it. The sick man raised his hands to heaven, and blessed the poor woman who gave it to him.

“O how I love her! and how I hate that cruel, unjust, rich man, who won’t pay father for all the hard work he has done for him!” cried the child: “How I hate him!”

“God forgive him!” said the weaver. “I don’t know what will become of you all, when I’m gone; and no one to befriend you—or even to work at the loom. Anne, I think if I was up,” said he, raising himself, “I could still contrive to do a little good.”

“Dear father, don’t think of getting up; the best you can do for us is to lie still and take rest.”

“Rest!—I can take no rest, Anne. Rest! there’s none for me in this world. And whilst I’m in it, is

not it my duty to work for my wife and children? Reach me my clothes, and I'll get up."

It was vain to contend with him, when this notion seized him that it was his duty to work till the last. All opposition fretted and made him worse; so that his daughter and his wife, even from affection, were forced to yield, and to let him go to the loom, when his trembling hands were scarcely able to throw the shuttle. He did not know how weak he was till he tried to walk. As he stepped out of bed, his wife came in with a loaf of bread in her hand—at the unexpected sight he made an exclamation of joy; sprang forward to meet her, but fell upon the floor in a swoon, before he could put one bit of the bread which she broke for him into his mouth. Want of sustenance, the having been overworked, and the constant anxiety which preyed upon his spirits, had reduced him to this deplorable state of weakness. When he recovered his senses, his wife showed him his little boy eating a large piece of bread—she also ate, and made Anne eat before him, to relieve his mind from that dread which had seized it—and not without some reason—that he should see his wife and children starve to death.

"You find, father, there's no danger for to-day," said Anne; "and to-morrow I shall be paid for my plain-work, and then we shall do very well for a few days longer; and I dare say in that time Mr. Close the tailor will receive some money from some of the great many rich gentlemen who owe him so much; and you know he promised that as soon as ever he was able he would pay us."

With such hopes, and the remembrance of such promises, the poor man's spirits could not be much raised; he knew, alas! how little dependence was to

be placed on them. As soon as he had eaten, and felt his strength revive, he insisted upon going to the loom : his mind was bent upon finishing a pattern, for which he was to receive five guineas in ready money—he worked and worked, then lay down and rested himself, then worked again, and so on during the remainder of the day ; and during several hours of the night he continued to throw the shuttle, whilst his little boy and his wife by turns wound spools for him.

He completed his work, and threw himself upon his bed quite exhausted, just as the neighbouring clock struck one.

At this hour colonel Pembroke was in the midst of a gay and brilliant assembly at Mrs. York's, in a splendid saloon illuminated with wax-lights in profusion, the floor crayoned with roses and myrtles, which the dancers' feet effaced, the walls hung with the most expensive hot-house flowers ; in short, he was surrounded with luxury in all its extravagance. It is said that the peaches alone at this entertainment amounted to six hundred guineas. They cost a guinea apiece : the price of one of them, which colonel Pembroke threw away because it was not perfectly ripe, would have supported the weaver and his whole family for a week.

There are political advocates for luxury, who assert, perhaps justly, that the extravagance of individuals increases the wealth of nations. But even upon this system, those who by false hopes excite the industrious to exertion, without paying them their just wages, commit not only the most cruel private injustice, but the most important public injury. The permanence of industry in any state must be proportioned to the certainty of its reward.

Amongst the masks at Mrs. York's were three, who

amused the company particularly: the festive mob followed them as they moved, and their bon-mots were applauded and repeated by all the best, that is to say, the most fashionable male and female judges of wit. The three distinguished characters were a spendthrift, a bailiff, and a dun. The spendthrift was supported with great spirit and *truth* by colonel Pembroke, and two of his companions were *great* and *correct* in the parts of the bailiff and the dun. The happy idea of appearing in these characters this night had been suggested by the circumstance that happened in the morning. Colonel Pembroke gave himself great credit, he said, for thus "striking novelty even from difficulty;" and he rejoiced that the rascal of a weaver had sent his boy to dun him, and had thus furnished him with diversion for the evening as well as the morning. We are much concerned that we cannot, for the advantage of posterity, record any of the innumerable *good things* which undoubtedly were uttered by this trio. Even the newspapers of the day could speak only in general panegyric. The probability, however, is, that the colonel deserved the praises that were lavished upon his manner of supporting his character. No man was better acquainted than himself with all those anecdotes of men of fashion, which could illustrate the spendthrift system. At least fifty times he had repeated, and always with the same *glee*, the reply of a great character to a creditor, who, upon being asked when his *bond* debts were likely to be paid, answered, "On the day of judgment."

Probably the admiration, which this and similar sallies of wit have excited, must have produced a strong desire in the minds of many young men of spirit to perform similar feats; and though the ruin of innumerable poor creditors may be the consequence,

that will not surely be deemed by a certain class of reasoners worthy of a moment's regret, or even a moment's thought. Persons of tender consciences may perhaps be shocked at the idea of committing injustice and cruelty by starving their creditors, but they may strengthen their minds by taking an enlarged political view of the subject.

It is obvious, that whether a hundred guineas be in the pocket of A or B, the total sum of the wealth of the nation remains the same; and whether the enjoyments of A be as 100, and those of B as 0,—or whether these enjoyments be equally divided between A and B,—is a matter of no importance to the political arithmetician, because in both cases it is obvious that the total sum of national happiness remains the same. The happiness of individuals is nothing compared with the general mass.

And if the individual B should fancy himself ill-used by our political arithmetician, and should take it into his head to observe, that though the happiness of B is nothing to the general mass, yet that it is every thing to him—the politician of course takes snuff, and replies, that his observation is foreign to the purpose—that the good of the whole society is the object in view. And if B immediately accede to this position, and only ask humbly whether the good of the whole be not made up of the good of the parts—and whether as a part he have not some right to his share of good—the dexterous logical arithmetician answers, that B is totally out of the question, because B is a negative quantity in the equation. And if obstinate B, still conceiving himself aggrieved, objects to this total annihilation of himself and his interests, and asks why the lot of extinction should not fall upon the debtor C, or even upon the calculator

himself, by whatever letter of the alphabet he happens to be designated, the calculator must knit his brow, and answer—any thing he pleases—except, *I don't know*—for this is a phrase below the dignity of a philosopher. This argument is produced, not as a statement of what is really the case, but as a popular argument against political sophistry.

Colonel Pembroke, notwithstanding his success at Mrs. York's masquerade in his character of a spendthrift, could not by his utmost wit and address satisfy or silence his impertinent tailor. Mr. Close absolutely refused to give further credit without valuable consideration ; and the colonel was compelled to pass his bond for the whole sum which was claimed, which was fifty pounds more than was strictly due, in order to compound with the tailor for the want of ready money. When the bond was fairly signed, sealed, and delivered, Mr. Close produced the poor weaver's bill.

"Colonel Pembroke," said he, "I have a trifling bill here—I am really ashamed to speak to you about such a trifle—but as we are settling all accounts—and as this White the weaver is so wretchedly poor, that he or some of his family are with me every day of my life dunning me to get me to speak about their little demand——"

"Who is this White?" said Mr. Pembroke.

"You recollect the elegant waistcoat pattern of which you afterwards bought up the whole piece, lest it should become common and vulgar?—this White was the weaver, from whom we got it."

"Bless me! why that's two years ago: I thought that fellow was paid long ago!"

"No, indeed; I wish he had; for he has been the

torment of my life this many a month—I never saw people so eager about their money.”

“ But why do you employ such miserable, greedy creatures? What can you expect but to be dunned every hour of your life?”

“ Very true, indeed, colonel ; it is what I always, on that principle, avoid as far as possibly I can : but I can’t blame myself in this particular instance ; for this White, at the time I employed him first, was a very decent man, and in a very good way, for one of his sort : but I suppose he has taken to drink, for he is worth not a farthing now.”

“ What business has a fellow of his sort to drink? he should leave that for his betters,” said colonel Pembroke, laughing. “ Drinking’s too great a pleasure for a weaver. The drunken rascal’s money is safer in my hands, tell him, than in his own.”

The tailor’s conscience twinged him a little at this instant, for he had spoken entirely at random, not having the slightest grounds for his insinuation that this poor weaver had ruined himself by drunkenness.

“ Upon my word, sir,” said Close, retracting, “ the man may not be a drunken fellow for any thing I know positively—I purely surmised *that* might be the case, from his having fallen into such distress, which is no otherwise accountable for, to my comprehension, except we believe his own story, that he has money due to him which he cannot get paid, and that this has been his ruin.”

Colonel Pembroke cleared his throat two or three times upon hearing this last suggestion, and actually took up the weaver’s bill with some intention of paying it ; but he recollected that he should want the ready money he had in his pocket for another in-

dispensable occasion ; for he was *obliged* to go to Brookes's that night ; so he contented his humanity by recommending it to Mr. Close to pay White and have done with him.

" If you let him have the money, you know, you can put it down to my account, or make a memorandum of it at the back of the bond. In short, settle it as you will, but let me hear no more about it. I have not leisure to think of such trifles—Good morning to you, Mr. Close."

Mr. Close was far from having any intentions of complying with the colonel's request. When the weaver's wife called upon him after his return home, he assured her that he had not seen the colour of one guinea, or one farthing, of colonel Pembroke's money, and that it was absolutely impossible that he could pay Mr. White till he was paid himself—that it could not be expected he should advance money for any body out of his own pocket—that he begged he might not be pestered and dunned any more, for that *he really had not leisure to think of such trifles.*

For want of this trifle, of which neither the fashionable colonel nor his fashionable tailor had leisure to think, the poor weaver and his whole family were reduced to the last degree of human misery—to absolute famine. The man had exerted himself to the utmost to finish a pattern, which had been bespoken for a tradesman who promised upon the delivery of it to pay him five guineas in hand. This money he received : but four guineas of it were due to his landlord for rent of his wretched garret, and the remaining guinea was divided between the baker, to whom an old bill was due, and the apothecary, to whom they were obliged to have recourse, as the weaver was extremely ill. They had literally no-

thing now to depend upon but what the wife and daughter could earn by needlework ; and they were known to be so miserably poor, that the *prudent* neighbours did not like to trust them with plain-work, lest it should not be returned safely. Besides, in such a dirty place as they lived in, how could it be expected that they should put any work out of their hands decently clean ? The woman to whom the house belonged, however, at last procured them work from Mrs. Carver, a widow lady, who she said was extremely charitable. She advised Anne to carry home the work as soon as it was finished, and to wait to see the lady herself, who might perhaps be as charitable to her as she was to many others. Anne resolved to take this advice : but when she carried home her work to the place to which she was directed, her heart almost failed her ; for she found Mrs. Carver lived in such a handsome house, that there was little chance of a poor girl being admitted by the servants further than the hall-door or the kitchen. The lady, however, happened to be just coming out of her parlour at the moment the hall-door was opened for Anne ; and she bid her come in, and show her work—approved of it—commended her industry—asked her several questions about her family—seemed to be touched with compassion by Anne's account of their distress—and after paying what she had charged for the work, put half-a-guinea into her hand, and bid her call the next day, when she hoped that she should be able to do something more for her. This unexpected bounty, and the kindness of voice and look with which it was accompanied, had such an effect upon the poor girl, that if she had not caught hold of a chair to support herself she would have sunk to the ground. Mrs. Carver immediately made her sit down

—"O madam! I'm well, quite well now—it was nothing—only surprise," said she, bursting into tears. "I beg your pardon for this foolishness—but it is only because I'm weaker to day than usual, for want of eating."

"For want of eating! my poor child! How she trembles! she is weak indeed—and must not leave my house in this condition."

Mrs. Carver rang the bell, and ordered a glass of wine: but Anne was afraid to drink it, as she was not used to wine, and as she knew that it would affect her head if she drank without eating. When the lady found that she refused the wine, she did not press it, but insisted upon her eating something.

"O madam!" said the poor girl, "it is long, long indeed, since I have eaten so heartily; and it is almost a shame for me to stay eating such dainties, when my father and mother are all the while in the way they are. But I'll run home with the half-guinea, and tell them how good you have been, and they will be so joyful and so thankful to you! My mother will come herself, I'm sure, with me to-morrow morning—she can thank you so much better than I can!"

Those only who have known the extreme of want can imagine the joy and gratitude with which the half-guinea was received by this poor family. Half-a-guinea!—Colonel Pembroke spent six half-guineas this very day in a fruit-shop, and ten times that sum at a jeweller's on seals and baubles for which he had no manner of use.

When Anne and her mother called the next morning to thank their benefactress, she was not up; but her servant gave them a parcel from his mistress: it contained a fresh supply of needlework, a gown, and

some other clothes, which were directed *for Anne*. The servant said, that if she would call again about eight in the evening, his lady would probably be able to see her, and that she begged to have the work finished by that time. The work was finished, though with some difficulty, by the appointed hour; and Anne, dressed in her new clothes, was at Mrs. Carver's door just as the clock struck eight. The old lady was alone at tea; she seemed to be well pleased by Anne's punctuality; said that she had made inquiries respecting Mr. and Mrs. White, and that she heard an excellent character of them; that therefore she was disposed to do every thing she could to serve them. She added, that she "should soon part with her own maid, and that perhaps Anne might supply her place." Nothing could be more agreeable to the poor girl than this proposal: her father and mother were rejoiced at the idea of seeing her so well placed; and they now looked forward impatiently for the day when Mrs. Carver's maid was to be dismissed. In the mean time the old lady continued to employ Anne, and to make her presents, sometimes of clothes, and sometimes of money. The money she always gave to her parents; and she loved her "good old lady," as she always called her, more for putting it in her power thus to help her father and mother than for all the rest. The weaver's disease had arisen from want of sufficient food, from fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind; and he grew rapidly better, now that he was relieved from want, and inspired with hope. Mrs. Carver bespoke from him two pieces of waistcoating, which she promised to dispose of for him most advantageously, by a raffle, for which she had raised subscriptions amongst her numerous acquaintance. She expressed great

indignation, when Anne told her how Mr. White had been ruined by persons who would not pay their just debts; and when she knew that the weaver was overcharged for all his working materials, because he took them upon credit, she generously offered to lend them whatever ready money might be necessary, which she said Anne might repay, at her leisure, out of her wages.

"O madam!" said Anne, "you are too good to us, indeed—too good! and if you could but see into our hearts, you would know that we are not ungrateful."

"I am sure *that* is what you never will be, my dear," said the old lady; "at least such is my opinion of you."

"Thank you, ma'am! thank you, from the bottom of my heart!—We should all have been starved, if it had not been for you. And it is owing to you that we are so happy now—quite different creatures from what we were."

"Quite a different creature indeed, you look, child, from what you did the first day I saw you. Tomorrow my own maid goes, and you may come at ten o'clock; and I hope we shall agree very well together—you'll find me an easy mistress, and I make no doubt I shall always find you the good grateful girl you seem to be."

Anne was impatient for the moment when she was to enter into the service of her benefactress; and she lay awake half the night, considering how she should ever be able to show sufficient gratitude. As Mrs. Carver had often expressed her desire to have Anne look neat and smart, she dressed herself as well as she possibly could; and when her poor father and mother took leave of her, they could not help observing, as Mrs. Carver had done the day before,

that "Anne looked quite a different creature from what she was a few weeks ago." She was, indeed, an extremely pretty girl; but we need not stop to relate all the fond praises that were bestowed upon her beauty by her partial parents. Her little brother John was not at home when she was going away; he was at a carpenter's shop in the neighbourhood mending a wheelbarrow, which belonged to that good-natured orange-woman who gave him the orange for his father. Anne called at the carpenter's shop to take leave of her brother. The woman was there waiting for her barrow—she looked earnestly at Anne when she entered, and then whispered to the boy, "Is that your sister?"—"Yes," said the boy, "and as good a sister she is as ever was born."

"May be so," said the woman; "but she is not likely to be good for much long, in the way she is going on now."

"What way?—what do you mean?" said Anne, colouring violently.

"O, you understand me well enough, though you look so innocent."

"I do not understand you in the least."

"No!—Why, is not it you that I see going almost every day to that house in Chiswell-street?"

"Mrs. Carver's?—Yes."

"Mrs. Carver's indeed!" cried the woman, throwing an orange-peel from her with an air of disdain—"a pretty come off indeed! as if I did not know her name, and all about her, as well as you do."

"Do you?" said Anne; "then I am sure you know one of the best women in the world."

The woman looked still more earnestly than before in Anne's countenance; and then taking hold of both her hands exclaimed, "You poor young creature!

what are you about? I do believe you don't know what you are about—if you do, you are the greatest cheat I ever looked in the face, long as I've lived in this cheating world."

"You frighten my sister," said the boy: "do pray tell her what you mean at once, for look how pale she turns."

"So much the better, for now I have good hope of her. Then to tell you all at once—no matter how I frighten her, it's for her good—this Mrs. Carver, as you call her, is only Mrs. Carver when she wants to pass upon such as you for a good woman."

"To *pass* for a good woman!" repeated Anne with indignation. "O, she is, she is a good woman—you do not know her as I do."

"I know her a great deal better, I tell you: if you choose not to believe me, go your ways—go to your ruin—go to your shame—go to your grave—as hundreds have gone, by the same road, before you. Your Mrs. Carver keeps two houses, and one of them is a bad house—and that's the house you'll soon go to, if you trust to her: now you know the whole truth."

The poor girl was shocked so much, that for several minutes she could neither speak nor think. As soon as she had recovered sufficient presence of mind to consider what she should do, she declared that she would that instant go home and put on her rags again, and return to the wicked Mrs. Carver all the clothes she had given her.

"But what will become of us all?—She has lent my father money—a great deal of money. How can he pay her?—O, I will pay her all—I will go into some honest service, now I am well and strong enough

to do any sort of hard work, and God knows I am willing."

Full of these resolutions, Anne hurried home, intending to tell her father and mother all that had happened; but they were neither of them within. She flew to the mistress of the house, who had first recommended her to Mrs. Carver, and reproached her in the most moving terms which the agony of her mind could suggest. Her landlady listened to her with astonishment, either real or admirably well affected—declared that she knew nothing more of Mrs. Carver but that she lived in a large fine house, and that she had been very charitable to some poor people in Moorfields—that she bore the best of characters—and that if nothing could be said against her but by an orange-woman, there was no great reason to believe such scandal.

Anne now began to think that the whole of what she had heard might be a falsehood, or a mistake; one moment she blamed herself for so easily suspecting a person who had shown her so much kindness; but the next minute the emphatic words and warning looks of the woman recurred to her mind; and though they were but the words and looks of an orange-woman, she could not help dreading that there was some truth in them. The clock struck ten whilst she was in this uncertainty. The woman of the house urged her to go without further delay to Mrs. Carver's, who would undoubtedly be displeased by any want of punctuality; but Anne wished to wait for the return of her father and mother.

"They will not be back, either of them, these three hours; for your mother is gone to the other end of the town about that old bill of colonel Pem-

broke's, and your father is gone to buy some silk for weaving—he told me he should not be home before three o'clock."

Notwithstanding these remonstrances, Anne persisted in her resolution: she took off the clothes which she had received from Mrs. Carver, and put on those which she had been used to wear. Her mother was much surprised, when she came in, to see her in this condition; and no words can describe her grief, when she heard the cause of this change. She blamed herself severely for not having made inquiries concerning Mrs. Carver before she had suffered her daughter to accept of any presents from her; and she wept bitterly, when she recollected the money which this woman had lent her husband.

"She will throw him into jail, I am sure she will—we shall be worse off a thousand times than ever we were in our worst days. The work that is in the loom, by which he hoped to get so much, is all for her, and it will be left upon hands now; and how are we to pay the woman of this house for the lodgings?—O! I see it all coming upon us at once," continued the poor woman, wringing her hands. "If that colonel Pembroke would but let us have our own!—But there I've been all the morning hunting him out, and at last, when I did see him, he only swore, and said we were all a family of *duns*, or some such nonsense. And then he called after me from the top of his fine stairs, just to say, that he had ordered Close the tailor to pay us; and when I went to him, there was no satisfaction to be got from him—his shop was full of customers, and he hustled me away; giving me for answer, that when colonel Pembroke paid him, he would pay us, and no sooner. And these purse-proud tradesfolk, and these sparks of

fashion, what do they know of all we suffer? What do they care for us?—It is not for charity I ask any of them—only for what my own husband has justly earned, and hardly toiled for too; and this I cannot get out of their hands. If I could, we might defy this wicked woman—but now we are laid under her feet, and she will trample us to death.”

In the midst of these lamentations, Anne's father came in: when he learnt the cause of them, he stood for a moment in silence; then snatched from his daughter's hand the bundle of clothes, which she had prepared to return to Mrs. Carver.

“Give them to me; I will go to this woman myself,” cried he with indignation: “Anne shall never more set her foot within those doors.”

“Dear father,” cried Anne, stopping him as he went out of the door, “perhaps it is all a mistake: do pray inquire from somebody else before you speak to Mrs. Carver—she looks so good, she has been so kind to me, I cannot believe that she is wicked. Do pray inquire of a great many people before you knock at the door.”

He promised that he would do all his daughter desired.

With most impatient anxiety they waited for his return: the time of his absence appeared insupportably long, and they formed new fears and new conjectures every instant. Every time they heard a footstep upon the stairs, they ran out to see who it was: sometimes it was the landlady—sometimes the lodgers or their visitors—at last came the person they longed to see; but the moment they beheld him, all their fears were confirmed. He was pale as death, and his lips trembled with convulsive motion. He walked directly up to his loom, and without

speaking one syllable began to cut the unfinished work out of it.

"What are you about, my dear?" cried his wife. "Consider what you are about—this work of yours is the only dependence we have in the world."

"You have nothing in this world to depend upon, I tell you," cried he, continuing to cut out the web with a hurried hand—"you must not depend on me—you must not depend on my work—I shall never throw this shuttle more whilst I live—think of me as if I was dead—to-morrow I shall be dead to you—I shall be in a jail, and there must lie till carried out in my coffin. Here, take this work just as it is to our landlady—she met me on the stairs, and said she must have her rent directly—that will pay her—I'll pay all I can. As for the loom, that's only hired—the silk I bought to-day will pay the hire—I'll pay all my debts to the uttermost farthing, as far as I am able—but the ten guineas to that wicked woman I cannot pay—so I must rot in a jail. Don't cry, Anne, don't cry so, my good girl—you'll break my heart, wife, if you take on so. Why! have not we one comfort, that let us go out of this world when we may, or how we may, we shall go out of it honest, having no one's ruin to answer for, having done our duty to God and man, as far as we are able?—My child," continued he, catching Anne in his arms, "I have you safe, and I thank God for it!"

When this poor man had thus in an incoherent manner given vent to his first feelings, he became somewhat more composed, and was able to relate all that had passed between him and Mrs. Carver. The inquiries which he made before he saw her sufficiently confirmed the orange-woman's story; and when he returned the presents, which Anne had unfortunately

received, Mrs. Carver, with all the audacity of a woman hardened in guilt, avowed her purpose and her profession—declared that whatever ignorance and innocence Anne or her parents might now find it convenient to affect, she “was confident they had all the time perfectly understood what she was about, and that she would not be cheated at last by a parcel of swindling hypocrites.” With horrid imprecations she then swore, that if Anne was kept from her she would have vengeance—and that her vengeance should know no bounds. The event showed that these were not empty threats—the very next day she sent two bailiffs to arrest Anne’s father. They met him in the street, as he was going to pay the last farthing he had to the baker. The wretched man in vain endeavoured to move the ear of justice, by relating the simple truth. Mrs. Carver was rich—her victim was poor. He was committed to jail; and he entered his prison with the firm belief, that there he must drag out the remainder of his days.

One faint hope remained in his wife’s heart—she imagined that if she could but prevail upon colonel Pembroke’s servants, either to obtain for her sight of their master, or if they would carry to him a letter containing an exact account of her distress, he would immediately pay the fourteen pounds, which had been so long due. With this money she could obtain her husband’s liberty, and she fancied all might yet be well. Her son, who could write a very legible hand, wrote the petition. “Ah, mother!” said he, “don’t hope that colonel Pembroke will read it—he will tear it to pieces, as he did one that I carried him before.”

“I can but try,” said she; “I cannot believe that any gentleman is so cruel, and so unjust—he

must and will pay us when he knows the whole truth."

Colonel Pembroke was dressing in a hurry, to go to a great dinner at the Crown and Anchor tavern. One of Pembroke's gay companions had called, and was in the room waiting for him. It was at this inauspicious time that Mrs. White arrived. Her petition the servant at first absolutely refused to take from her hands; but at last a young lad, whom the colonel had lately brought from the country, and who had either more natural feeling, or less acquired power of equivocating, than his fellows, consented to carry up the petition, when he should, as he expected, be called by his master to report the state of a favourite horse that was sick. While his master's hair was dressing, the lad was summoned; and when the health of the horse had been anxiously inquired into, the lad with country awkwardness scratched his head, and laid the petition before his master, saying—"Sir, there's a poor woman below waiting for an answer; and if so be what she says is true, as I take it to be, 'tis enough to break one's heart."

"Your heart, my lad, is not seasoned to London yet, I perceive," said colonel Pembroke, smiling; "why your heart will be broke a thousand times over by every beggar you meet."

"No, no: I be too much of a man for that," replied the groom, wiping his eyes hastily with the back of his hand—"not such a noodle as that comes too neither—beggars are beggars, and so to be treated—but this woman, sir, is no common beggar—not she; nor is she begging any ways—only to be paid her bill—so I brought it, as I was coming up."

"Then, sir, as you are going down, you may take it down again, if you please," cried colonel Pem-

broke; "and in future, sir, I recommend it to you to look after your horses, and to trust me to look after my own affairs."

The groom retreated; and his master gave the poor woman's petition, without reading it, to the hairdresser, who was looking for a piece of paper to try the heat of his irons.

"I should be pestered with bills and petitions from morning till night, if I did not frighten these fellows out of the trick of bringing them to me," continued colonel Pembroke, turning to his companion. "That blockhead of a groom is but just come to town; he does not know yet how to drive away a dun—but he'll learn. They say that the American dogs did not know how to bark, till they learnt it from their civilised betters."

Colonel Pembroke habitually drove away reflection, and silenced the whispers of conscience, by noisy declamation, or sallies of wit.

At the bottom of the singed paper, which the hairdresser left on the table, the name of White was sufficiently visible. "White!" exclaimed Mr. Pembroke, "as I hope to live and breathe, these Whites have been this half-year the torment of my life." He started up, rang the bell, and gave immediate orders to his servant, that *these Whites* should never more be let in, and that no more of their bills and petitions in any form whatever should be brought to him. I'll punish them for their insolence—I won't pay them one farthing this twelvemonth: and if the woman is not gone, pray tell her so—I bid Close the tailor pay them: if he has not, it is no fault of mine. Let me not hear a syllable more about it—I'll part with the first of you who dares to disobey me."

"The woman is gone, I believe, sir," said the foot-

man; "it was not I let her in, and I refused to bring up the letter."

"You did right. Let me hear no more about the matter. We shall be late at the Crown and Anchor. I beg your pardon, my dear friend, for detaining you so long."

Whilst the colonel went to his jovial meeting, where he was the life and spirit of the company, the poor woman returned in despair to the prison where her husband was confined.

We forbear to describe the horrible situation to which this family were soon reduced. Beyond a certain point, the human heart cannot feel compassion.

One day, as Anne was returning from the prison, where she had been with her father, she was met by a porter, who put a letter into her hands, then turned down a narrow lane, and was out of sight before she could inquire from whom he came. When she read the letter, however, she could not be in doubt—it came from Mrs. Carver, and contained these words:—

"You can gain nothing by your present obstinacy—you are the cause of your father's lying in jail, and of your mother's being, as she is, nearly starved to death. You can relieve them from misery worse than death, and place them in ease and comfort for the remainder of their days. Be assured, they do not speak sincerely to you, when they pretend not to wish that your compliance should put an end to their present sufferings. It is you that are cruel to them—it is you that are cruel to yourself, and can blame nobody else. You might live all your days in a house as good as mine, and have a plentiful table served from one year's end to another, with all the

dainties of the season, and you might be dressed as elegantly as the most elegant lady in London (which, by-the-by, your beauty deserves), and you would have servants of your own, and a carriage of your own, and nothing to do all day long but take your pleasure. And after all, what is asked of you?—only to make a person happy, whom half the town would envy you, that would make it a study to gratify you in every wish of your heart. The person alluded to you have seen, and more than once, when you have been talking to me of work in my parlour. He is a very rich and generous gentleman. If you come to Chiswell-street about six this evening you will find all I say true—if not, you and yours must take the consequences.”

Coarse as the eloquence of this letter may appear, Anne could not read it without emotion: it raised in her heart a violent contest. Virtue, with poverty and famine, were on one side—and vice, with affluence, love, and every worldly pleasure, on the other.

Those who have been bred up in the lap of luxury; whom the breath of heaven has never visited too roughly; whose minds from their earliest infancy have been guarded even with more care than their persons; who in the dangerous season of youth are surrounded by all that the solicitude of experienced friends, and all that polished society, can devise for their security; are not perhaps competent to judge of the temptations by which beauty in the lower classes of life may be assailed. They who have never seen a father in prison, or a mother perishing for want of the absolute necessities of life—they who have never themselves known the cravings of famine, cannot form an adequate idea of this poor girl's feel-

ings, and of the temptation to which she was now exposed. She wept—she hesitated—and “the woman that deliberates is lost.” Perhaps those who are the most truly virtuous of her sex will be the most disposed to feel for this poor creature, who was literally half famished before her good resolutions were conquered. At last she yielded to necessity. At the appointed hour, she was in Mrs. Carver’s house. This woman received her with triumph—she supplied Anne immediately with food, and then hastened to deck out her victim in the most attractive manner. The girl was quite passive in her hands. She promised, though scarcely knowing that she uttered the words, to obey the instructions that were given to her, and she suffered herself without struggle, or apparent emotion, to be led to destruction. She appeared quite insensible—but at last she was roused from this state of stupefaction, by the voice of a person with whom she found herself alone. The stranger, who was a young and gay gentleman, pleasing both in his person and manners, attempted by every possible means to render himself agreeable to her, to raise her spirits, and calm her apprehensions. By degrees, his manner changed from levity to tenderness. He represented to her, that he was not a brutal wretch, who could be gratified by any triumph in which the affections of the heart have no share; and he assured her, that in any connexion which she might be prevailed upon to form with him, she should be treated with honour and delicacy.

Touched by his manner of speaking, and overpowered by the sense of her own situation, Anne could not reply one single word to all he said—but burst into an agony of tears, and sinking on her knees before him, exclaimed, “Save me! save me from

myself!—Restore me to my parents, before they have reason to hate me.”—

The gentleman seemed to be somewhat in doubt whether this was *acting* or nature: but he raised Anne from the ground, and placed her upon a seat beside him. “Am I to understand, then, that I have been deceived, and that our present meeting is against your own consent?”

“No, I cannot say that—O how I wish that I could!—I did wrong, very wrong, to come here—but I repent—I was half-starved—I have a father in jail—I thought I could set him free with the money—but I will not pretend to be better than I am—I believe I thought that, beside relieving my father, I should live all my days without ever more knowing what distress is—and I thought I should be happy—but now I have changed my mind—I never could be happy with a bad conscience—I know—by what I have felt this last hour.”

Her voice failed; and she sobbed for some moments without being able to speak. The gentleman, who now was convinced that she was quite artless and thoroughly in earnest, was struck with compassion; but his compassion was not unmixed with other feelings, and he had hopes that, by treating her with tenderness, he should in time make it her wish to live with him as his mistress. He was anxious to hear what her former way of life had been; and she related, at his request, the circumstances by which she and her parents had been reduced to such distress. His countenance presently showed how much he was interested in her story—he grew red and pale—he started from his seat, and walked up and down the room in great agitation, till at last, when she mentioned the name of colonel Pembroke, he stopped

short, and exclaimed, " I am the man—I am colonel Pembroke—I am that unjust, unfeeling wretch ! How often, in the bitterness of your hearts, you must have cursed me !"

" O ! no—my father, when he was at the worst, never cursed you ; and I am sure he will have reason to bless you now, if you send his daughter back again to him, such as she was when she left him."

" That shall be done," said colonel Pembroke ; " and in doing so, I make some sacrifice, and have some merit. It is time I should make some reparation for the evils I have occasioned," continued he, taking a handful of guineas from his pocket : " but first let me pay my just debts."

" My poor father !" exclaimed Anne,—" to-morrow he will be out of prison."

" I will go with you to the prison, where your father is confined—I will force myself to behold all the evils I have occasioned."

Colonel Pembroke went to the prison ; and he was so much struck by the scene, that he not only relieved the misery of this family, but in two months afterwards his debts were paid, his race-horses sold, and all his expenses regulated, so as to render him ever afterwards truly independent. He no longer spent his days, like many young men of fashion, either in DREADING or in DAMNING DUNS.

Edgeworthstown, 1802.

MANŒUVRING.

MANŒUVRING.

CHAPTER I.

“ And gave her words, where oily Flatt’ry lays
The pleasing colours of the art of praise.”

PARNELL.

NOTE FROM MRS. BEAUMONT TO MISS WAL- SINGHAM.

“ I AM more grieved than I can express, my dearest miss Walsingham, by a cruel *contre-temps*, which must prevent my indulging myself in the long-promised and long-expected pleasure of being at your *fête de famille* on Tuesday, to celebrate your dear father’s birthday. I trust, however, to your conciliating goodness, my kind young friend, to represent my distress properly to Mr. Walsingham. Make him sensible, I conjure you, that my *heart* is with you all, and assure him that this is no common apology. Indeed, I never employ such artifices with my friends ; to them, and to you in particular, my dear, I always speak with perfect frankness and candour.

Amelia, with whom, *entre nous*, you are more a favourite than ever, is so much vexed and mortified by this disappointment, that I see I shall not be restored to favour till I can fix a day for going to you : yet when that may be, circumstances, which I should not feel myself quite justified in mentioning, will not permit me to decide.

“ Kindest regards and affectionate remembrances to all your dear circle. Any news of the young captain ? Any hopes of his return from sea ?

Ever with perfect truth,
my dearest miss Walsingham's
sincere friend,

EUGENIA BEAUMONT.

“ P. S. *Private—read to yourself.*

“ To be candid with you, my dear young friend, my secret reason for denying myself the pleasure of Tuesday's fête is, that I have just heard that there is a shocking chicken-pox in the village near you ; and I confess it is one of my weaknesses to dread even the bare rumour of such a thing, on account of my Amelia : but I should not wish to have this mentioned in your house, because you must be sensible your father would think it an idle womanish fear ; and you know how anxious I am for his esteem.

“ Burn this, I beseech you——

“ Upon second thoughts, I believe it will be best to tell the truth, and the whole truth, to your father, if you should see that nothing else will do——In short, I write in haste, and must trust now, as ever, entirely to your discretion.”

“ Well, my dear,” said Mr. Walsingham to his daughter, as the young lady sat at the breakfast-table

looking over this note, "how long do you mean to sit the picture of The delicate Embarrassment? To relieve you as far as in me lies, let me assure you that I shall not ask to see this note of Mrs. Beaumont's, which as usual seems to contain some mighty mystery."

"No great mystery; only——"

"Only—some minikin mystery?" said Mr. Walsingham. "Yes, '*Elle est politique pour des choux et des raves*.' This charming widow Beaumont is a *manceuvrer**. We can't well make an English word of it. The species, thank Heaven! is not so numerous yet in England as to require a generic name. The description, however, has been touched by one of our poets:

'Julia's a manager: she's born for rule,
And knows her wiser husband is a fool.
For her own breakfast she'll project a scheme,
Nor take her tea without a stratagem.'

Even from the time when Mrs. Beaumont was a girl of sixteen I remember her *manceuvring* to gain a hus-

* It is to be regretted that a word, used in the days of Charles II. and still intelligible in our times, should have become obsolete; viz. the feminine for *intriguer*—an *intriguess*. See the Life of Lord Keeper North, whose biographer, in speaking of Lord Keeper Bridgeman, says, "And what was worst of all, his family was no way fit for that place (of Chancellor), his lady being a most violent *INTRIGUESS* in business."

Had Mr. Walsingham lived in Ireland, even there he might have found in the dialect of the lower Irish both a substantive and a verb, which would have expressed his idea. The editor once described an individual of the Beaumont species to an Irish labourer, and asked what he would call such a person—"I'd call her a policizer—I would say she was fond of policizing."

band, and then manœuvring to manage him, which she did with triumphant address."

"What sort of a man was colonel Beaumont?"

"An excellent man; an open-hearted soldier, of the strictest honour and integrity."

"Then is it not much in Mrs. Beaumont's favour, that she enjoyed the confidence of such a man, and that he left her guardian to his son and daughter?"

"If he had lived with her long enough to become acquainted with her real character, what you say, my dear, would be unanswerable. But colonel Beaumont died a few years after his marriage, and during those few years he was chiefly with his regiment."

"You will however allow," said miss Walsingham, "that since his death Mrs. Beaumont has justified his confidence.—Has she not been a good guardian, and an affectionate mother?"

"Why—as a guardian, I think she has allowed her son too much liberty, and too much money. I have heard that young Beaumont has lost a considerable sum at Newmarket. I grant you that Mrs. Beaumont is an affectionate mother, and I am convinced that she is extremely anxious to advance the worldly interests of her children; still I cannot, my dear, agree with you, that she is a good mother. In the whole course of the education of her son and daughter, she has pursued a system of artifice. Whatever she wanted them to learn, or to do, or to leave undone, some stratagem, sentimental or scenic, was employed; some body was to hint to some other body to act upon Amelia to make her do so and so. Nothing—that is, nothing like truth, ever came directly from the mother: there were always whisperings and mysteries, and 'Don't say that before Amelia!' and 'I would not have this told to Edward,' because it

might make him like something that she did not wish that he should like, and that she had *her reasons* for not letting him know that she did not wish him to like. There was always some truth to be concealed for some mighty good purpose ; and things and persons were to be represented in false lights, to produce on some particular occasion some partial effect. All this succeeded admirably in detail, and for the management of helpless, ignorant, credulous childhood. But mark the consequences of this system ; children grow up, and cannot always see, hear, and understand, just as their mothers please. They will go into the world ; they will mix with others ; their eyes will be opened ; they will see through the whole system of artifice by which their childhood was so cleverly managed ; and then, confidence in the parent must be destroyed for ever."

Miss Walsingham acknowledged the truth of what her father said ; but she observed that this was a common error in education, which had the sanction of high authority in its favour ; even the eloquent Rousseau, and the elegant and ingenious madame de Genlis. " And it is certain," continued miss Walsingham, " that Mrs. Beaumont has not made her children artful ; both Amelia and Mr. Beaumont are remarkably open, sincere, honourable characters. Mr. Beaumont, indeed, carries his sincerity almost to a fault : he is too blunt, perhaps, in his manner ;—and Amelia, though she is of such a timid, gentle temper, and so much afraid of giving pain, has always courage enough to speak the truth, even in circumstances where it is most difficult. So at least you must allow, my dear father, that Mrs. Beaumont has made her children sincere."

" I am sorry, my dear, to seem uncharitable ; but

I must observe, that sometimes the very faults of parents produce a tendency to opposite virtues in their children: for the children suffer by the consequences of these faults, and detecting, despise, and resolve to avoid them. As to Amelia and Mr. Beaumont, their acquaintance with our family has been no unfavourable circumstance in their education. They saw amongst us the advantages of sincerity: they became attached to you, and to my excellent ward captain Walsingham; he obtained strong power over young Beaumont's mind, and used it to the best purposes. Your friendship for Amelia was, I think, equally advantageous to her: as you are nearly of the same age, you had opportunities of winning her confidence; and your stronger mind fortified hers, and inspired her timid character with the courage necessary to be sincere."

"Well," persisted miss Walsingham, "though Mrs. Beaumont may have used a little *finesse* towards her children in trifles, yet in matters of consequence, I do think, that she has no interest but theirs; and her affection for them will make her lay aside all art, when their happiness is at stake."

Mr. Walsingham shook his head.—"And do you then really believe, my dear Marianne, that Mrs. Beaumont would consider any thing, for instance, in the marriage of her son and daughter, but fortune, and what the world calls *connexion* and *establishments*?"

"Certainly I cannot think that these are Mrs. Beaumont's first objects; because we are people but of small fortune, and yet she prefers us to many of large estates and higher station."

"You should say, she professes to prefer us," replied Mr. Walsingham. "And do you really believe

her to be sincere? Now there is my ward, captain Walsingham, for whom she pretends to have such a regard, do you think that Mrs. Beaumont wishes her daughter should marry him?"

"I do, indeed; but Mrs. Beaumont must speak cautiously on that subject; this is prudence, not dissimulation: for you know that my cousin Walsingham never declared his attachment to miss Beaumont; on the contrary, he always took the most scrupulous pains to conceal it from her, because he had not fortune enough to marry, and he was too honourable to attempt, or even to wish, to engage the affections of one to whom he had no prospect of being united."

"He is a noble fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Walsingham. "There is no sacrifice of pleasure or interest he would hesitate to make to his duty. For his friends there is no exertion, no endurance, no forbearance, of which he has not shown himself capable. For his country—All I ask from Heaven for him is, opportunity to serve his country. Whether circumstances, whether success, will ever prove his merits to the world, I cannot foretell; but I shall always glory in him as my ward, my relation, my friend."

"Mrs. Beaumont speaks of him just as you do," said miss Walsingham.

"Speaks, but not thinks," said Mr. Walsingham. "No, no! captain Walsingham is not the man she desires for a son-in-law. She wants to marry Amelia to sir John Hunter."

"To sir John Hunter!"

"Yes, to sir John Hunter, a being without literature, without morals, without even youth, to plead in his favour. He is nearly forty years old, old

enough to be Amelia's father; yet this is the man whom Mrs. Beaumont prefers for the husband of her beloved daughter, because he is heir presumptive to a great estate, and has the chance of a reversionary earldom.—And this is your modern good mother."

"O, no, no!" cried miss Walsingham, "you do Mrs. Beaumont injustice; I assure you she despises sir John Hunter as much as we do."

"Yet observe the court she has paid to the whole family of the Hunters."

"Yes, but that has been merely from regard to the late lady Hunter, who was her particular friend."

"*Particular friend!* a vamped-up, sentimental conversation reason."

"But I assure you," persisted miss Walsingham, "that I know Mrs. Beaumont's mind better than you do, father, at least on this subject."

"You! a girl of eighteen pretend to know a manœuvrer of her age!"

"Only let me tell you my reasons.—It was but last week that Mrs. Beaumont told me that she did not wish to encourage sir John Hunter, and that she should be perfectly happy if she could see Amelia united to such a man as captain Walsingham."

"Such a man as captain Walsingham! nicely guarded expression!"

"But you have not heard all yet.—Mrs. Beaumont anxiously inquired from me whether he had made any prize-money, whether there was any chance of his returning soon; and she added, with particular emphasis, 'You don't know how much I wish it! You don't know what a favourite he is of mine!'"

"That last, I will lay any wager," cried Mr. Walsingham, "she said in a whisper, and in a corner."

"Yes, but she could not do otherwise, for Amelia was present. Mrs. Beaumont took me aside."

"Aside; ay, ay, but take care, I advise you, of her *asides*, and her whisperings, and her cornerings, and her innuendoes, and semiconfidences, lest your own happiness, my dear, unsuspecting, enthusiastic daughter, should be the sacrifice."

Miss Walsingham now stood perfectly silent, in embarrassed and breathless anxiety.

"I see," continued her father, "that Mrs. Beaumont, for whose mighty genius one intrigue at a time is not sufficient, wants also to persuade you, my dear, that she wishes to have you for a daughter-in-law: and yet all the time she is doing every thing she can to make her son marry that fool, miss Hunter, merely because she has two hundred thousand pounds fortune."

"There I can assure you that you are mistaken," said miss Walsingham; "Mrs. Beaumont dreads that her son should marry miss Hunter. Mrs. Beaumont thinks her as silly as you do, and complained to me of her having no taste for literature, or for any thing, but dress, and trifling conversation."

"I wonder, then, that Mrs. Beaumont selects her continually for her companion."

"She thinks miss Hunter the most insipid companion in the world; but I dare not tell you, lest you should laugh at me again, that it was for the sake of the late lady Hunter that Mrs. Beaumont was so kind to the daughter; and now miss Hunter is so fond of her, and so grateful, that, as Mrs. Beaumont says, it would be cruelty to shake her off."

"Mighty plausible! But the truth of all this, begging Mrs. Beaumont's pardon, I doubt; I will not call it a falsehood, but I may be permitted to call it a

Beaumont. Time will show : and in the mean time, my dear daughter, be on your guard against Mrs. Beaumont's art, and against your own credulity. The momentary pain I give my friends by speaking the plain truth, I have always found overbalanced by the pleasure and advantage of mutual confidence. Our domestic happiness has arisen chiefly from our habits of openness and sincerity. Our whole souls are laid open ; there is no management, no '*intrigue de cabinet*,' no '*esprit de la ligue*.'"

Mr. Walsingham now left the room ; and miss Walsingham, absorbed in reflections more interesting to her than even the defence of Mrs. Beaumont, went out to walk. Her father's house was situate in a beautiful part of Devonshire, near the sea-shore, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth ; and as miss Walsingham was walking on the beach, she saw an old fisherman mooring his boat to the projecting stump of a tree. His figure was so picturesque, that she stopped to sketch it ; and as she was drawing, a woman came from a cottage near the shore to ask the fisherman what luck he had had. " A fine turbot," says he, " and a john-doree."

" Then away with them this minute to Beaumont Park," said the woman, " for here's madam Beaumont's man, Martin, called in a *flustrum* while you was away, to say madam must have the nicest of our fish, whatsoever it might be, and a john-doree, if it could be had for love or money, for Tuesday."—— Here the woman, perceiving miss Walsingham, dropped a curtsy. " Your humble servant, miss Walsingham," said the woman.

" On Tuesday?" said miss Walsingham : " are you sure that Mrs. Beaumont bespoke the fish for Tuesday?"

“ O *sartin* sure, miss ; for Martin mentioned, moreover, what he had heard talk in the servants’ hall, that there is to be a very *pettiklar* old gentleman, as rich ! as rich ! as rich can be ! from foreign parts, and a great friend of the colonel that’s dead ; and he—that is, the old *pettiklar* gentleman—is to be down all the way from Lon’on to dine at the park on Tuesday for *sartin* :—so, husband, away with the john-doree and the turbot, while they be fresh.”

“ But why,” thought miss Walsingham, “ did not Mrs. Beaumont tell us the plain truth, if this is the truth ? ”

CHAPTER II.

“ Young Hermes next, a close contriving god,
Her brows encircled with his serpent rod ;
Then plots and fair excuses fill her brain,
And views of breaking am’rous vows for gain.”

THE information which Mrs. Beaumont’s man, Martin, had learned from the servants’ hall, and had communicated to the fisherman’s wife, was more correct, and had been less amplified, embellished, misunderstood, or misrepresented, than is usually found to be the case with pieces of news which are so heard and so repeated. It was true, that Mrs. Beaumont expected to see on Tuesday an old gentleman, a Mr. Palmer, who had been a friend of her husband’s ; he had lately returned from Jamaica, where he had made a large fortune. It is true, also, that this old gentleman was a *little particular*, but not precisely in the sense in which the fisherman’s wife understood the phrase ; he was not particularly fond of john-

dorees and turbots, but particularly fond of making his fellow-creatures happy; particularly generous, particularly open and honest in his nature, abhorring all artifice himself, and unsuspicious of it in others. He was unacquainted with Mrs. Beaumont's character, as he had been for many years in the West Indies, and he knew her only from her letters, in which she appeared every thing that was candid and amiable. His great friendship for her deceased husband also inclined him to like her. Colonel Beaumont had appointed him one of the guardians of his children, but Mr. Palmer, being absent from England, had declined to act; he was also trustee to Mrs. Beaumont's marriage-settlement, and she had represented that it was necessary he should be present at the settlement of her family affairs upon her son's coming of age; an event which was to take place in a few days. The urgent representations of Mrs. Beaumont, and the anxious desire she expressed to see Mr. Palmer, had at last prevailed with the good old gentleman to journey down to Beaumont Park, though he was a valetudinarian, and though he was obliged, he said, to return to Jamaica with the West India fleet, which was expected to sail in ten days; so that he announced positively that he could stay but a week at Beaumont Park with his good friends and relations.

He was related but distantly to the Beaumonts, and he stood in precisely the same degree of relationship to the Walsinghams. He had no other relations, and his fortune was completely at his own disposal. On this fortune our cunning widow had speculated long and deeply, though in fact there was no occasion for art: it was Mr. Palmer's intention to leave his large fortune to the Beaumonts; or to divide it between the Beaumont and Walsingham families; and

had she been sincere in her professed desire of a complete union by a double marriage between the representatives of the families, her favourite object would have been, in either case, equally secure. Here was a plain easy road to her object ; but it was too direct for Mrs. Beaumont. With all her abilities, she could never comprehend the axiom that a straight line is the shortest possible line between any two points :—an axiom equally true in morals and in mathematics. No, the serpentine line was, in her opinion, not only the most beautiful, but the most expeditious, safe, and convenient.

She had formed a triple scheme of such intricacy, that it is necessary distinctly to state the argument of her plot, lest the action should be too complicated easily to be developed.

She had, in the first place, a design of engrossing the whole of Mr. Palmer's fortune for her own family ; and for this purpose she determined to prevent Mr. Palmer from becoming acquainted with his other relations, the Walsinghams ; to whom she had always had a secret dislike, because they were of remarkably open sincere characters. As Mr. Palmer proposed to stay but a week in the country, this scheme of preventing their meeting seemed feasible.

In the second place, Mrs. Beaumont wished to marry her daughter to sir John Hunter, because sir John was heir expectant to a large estate, called the Wigram estate, and because there was in his family a certain reversionary title, the earldom of Puckeridge, which would devolve to sir John after the death of a near relation.

In the third place, Mrs. Beaumont wished to marry her own son to miss Hunter, who was sir John's sister by a second marriage, and above twenty years younger

than he was: this lady was preferred to miss Walsingham for a daughter-in-law, for the reasons which Mr. Walsingham had given; because she possessed an independent fortune of two hundred thousand pounds, and because she was so childish and silly that Mrs. Beaumont thought she could always manage her easily, and by this means retain power over her son. Miss Hunter was very pretty, and Mrs. Beaumont had observed that her son had sometimes been struck with her beauty sufficiently to give hopes that, by proper management, he might be diverted from his serious, sober preference of miss Walsingham.

Mrs. Beaumont foresaw many difficulties in the execution of these plans. She knew that Amelia liked captain Walsingham, and that captain Walsingham was attached to her, though he had never declared his love: and she dreaded that captain Walsingham, who was at this time at sea, should return, just whilst Mr. Palmer was with her; because she was well aware that the captain was a kind of man Mr. Palmer would infinitely prefer to sir John Hunter. Indeed she had been secretly informed that Mr. Palmer hated every one who had a title; therefore she could not, whilst he was with her, openly encourage sir John Hunter in his addresses to Amelia. To conciliate these seemingly incompatible schemes, she determined——But let our heroine speak for herself.

“My dearest miss Hunter,” said she, “now we are by ourselves, let me open my mind to you: I have been watching for an opportunity these two days, but so hurried as I have been!—Where’s Amelia?”

“Out walking, ma’am. She told me you begged her to walk to get rid of her head-ache; and that

she might look well to-day, as Mr. Palmer is to come. I would not go with her, because you whispered to me at breakfast that you had something very particular to say to me."

"But you did not give *that* as a reason, I hope! Surely you didn't tell Amelia that I had something particular to say to you?"

"O! no, ma'am; I told her that I had something to do about my dress—and so I had—my new hat to try on."

"True, my love; quite right; for you know I wouldn't have her suspect that we had any thing to say to each other that we didn't wish her to hear, especially as it is about herself."

"Herself!—O, is it?" said miss Hunter, in a tone of disappointment.

"And about you too, my darling. Be assured I have no daughter I love better, or ever shall. With such a son as I have, and such a daughter-in-law as I hope and trust I shall have ere long, I shall think myself the most fortunate of mothers."

Silly miss Hunter's face brightened up again. "But now, my love," continued Mrs. Beaumont, taking her hand, leading her to a window, and speaking very low, though no one else was in the room, "before we talk any more of what is nearest my heart, I must get you to write a note for me to your brother, directly, for there is a circumstance I forgot—thoughtless creature that I am! but indeed, I never can *think* when I *feel* much. Some people are always so collected and prudent. But I have none of that!—Heigho! Well, my dear, you must supply my deficiencies. You will write and tell sir John, that in my agitation when he made his proposal for my Amelia, of which I so frankly approved, I omitted to

warn him, that no hint must be given that I do any thing more than permit him to address my daughter upon an equal footing with any other gentleman who might address her. Stay, my dear ; you don't understand me, I see. In short, to be candid with you—old Mr. Palmer is coming to-day, you know. Now, my dear, you must be aware that it is of the greatest consequence to the interests of my family, of which I hope you always consider yourself (for I have always considered you) as forming a part, and a very distinguished part—I say, my darling, that we must consider that it is our interest in all things to please and humour this good old gentleman. He will be with us but for a week, you know.—Well, the point is this. I have been informed from undoubted authority, people who were about him at the time, and knew, that the reason he quarrelled with that nephew of his, who died two years ago, was the young man's having accepted a baronetage: and at that time old Palmer swore, that *no sprig of quality*—those were the very words—should ever inherit a shilling of his money. Such a ridiculous whim ! But these London merchants, who make great fortunes from nothing, are apt to have their little eccentricities ; and then, they have so much pride in their own way, and so much self-will and mercantile downrightness in their manners, that there's no managing them but by humouring their fancies. I'm convinced, if Mr. Palmer suspected that I even wished Amelia to marry sir John, he would never leave any of us a farthing, and it would all go to the Walsinghams. So, my dear, do you explain to your brother, that though I have not the least objection to his coming here whilst Mr. Palmer is with us, he must not take umbrage at any coming coldness in my manner. He knows my heart,

I trust ; at least, you do, my Albina. And even if I should be obliged to receive or to go to see the Walsinghams, which, by the by, I have taken means to prevent ; but if it should happen that they were to hear of Palmer's being with us, and come, and sir John should meet them, he must not be surprised or jealous at my speaking in the highest terms of captain Walsingham. This I shall be obliged to do as a blind before Mr. Palmer. I must make him believe that I prefer a commoner for my son-in-law, or we are all undone with him. You know it is my son's interest, and yours, as well as your brother's and Amelia's, that I consider. So explain all this to him, my dear ; you will explain it so much better, and make it so much more palpable to your brother, than I could."

" Dear Mrs. Beaumont, how can you think so ? You who write so well, and such long letters about every thing, and so quick ! But goodness ! I shall never get it all into a letter I'm afraid, and before Mr. Palmer comes, and then it will soon be dressing-time ! La ! I could say it all to John in five minutes : what a pity he is not here to-day !"

" Well, my love, then suppose you were to go to him ; as you so prudently remark, things of this sort are always so much easier and better said than written. And now I look at my watch, I see you cannot have time to write a long letter, and to dress. So I believe, though I shall grieve to lose you, I must consent to your going for this one day to your brother's. My carriage and Williamson shall attend you," said Mrs. Beaumont, ringing the bell to order the carriage ; " but remember you promise me now to come back, positively, to-morrow, or next day at farthest, if I should not be able to send the carriage again to-morrow. I would not, upon any account,

have you away, if it can possibly be helped, whilst Mr. Palmer is here, considering you as I do—[The carriage to the door directly, and Williamson to attend miss Hunter.]—considering you as I do, my dearest Albina, quite as my own daughter.”

“ O my dearest Mrs. Beaumont, you are so kind !” said the poor girl, whom Mrs. Beaumont could always thus easily *pay with words*.

The carriage came to the door with such prompt obedience to Mrs. Beaumont’s summons, that one of a more reflecting or calculating nature than miss Hunter might have suspected that it had been ordered to be in readiness to carry her away this morning.

“ Fare ye well, my own Albina ! be sure you don’t stay long from us,” said Mrs. Beaumont, accompanying her to the hall-door. “ A thousand kind things to every body, and your brother in particular. But, my dear miss Hunter, one word more,” said she, following to the carriage door, and whispering : “ there’s another thing that I must trust to your management and cleverness ;—I mentioned that Mr. Palmer was to know nothing of *the approbation* of sir John’s suit.”

“ O yes, yes, ma’am, I understand perfectly.”

“ But stay, my love ; you must understand, too, that it is to be quite a secret between ourselves, not to be mentioned to my son even ; for you know he is sudden in his temper, and warm, and quite in the Walsingham interest, and there’s no knowing what might be the consequence if it were to be let out imprudently, and sir John and Edward both so high-spirited. One can’t be too cautious, my dear, to prevent mischief between gentlemen. So caution your brother to leave it to me to break it, and bring

things about with Edward and Amelia"—[stopping miss Hunter again as she made a second effort to get into the carriage.]—" You comprehend, my dear, that Amelia is not in the secret yet—so not a word from your brother to her about *my approbation!* that would ruin all. I trust to his honour ; and besides——" drawing the young lady back for the third whisper.—Miss Hunter stood suspended with one foot in air, and the other on the step ; the coachman, impatient to be off, manœuvred to make his horses restless, whilst at the same time he cried aloud—" So ! so ! Prancer—stand still, Peacock ; stand still, sir !"

Miss Hunter jumped down on terra firma. " Those horses frighten me so for you, my dear !" said Mrs. Beaumont. " Martin, stand at their heads. My dear child, I won't detain you, for you'll be late. I had only to say, that—O ! that I trust implicitly to your brother's honour ; but, beside this, it will not be amiss for you to hint, as you know you can delicately—*delicately*, you understand—that it is for his interest to leave me to manage every thing. Yet none of this is to be said *as if from me*—pray don't let it come from me. Say it all from yourself. Don't let my name be mentioned at all. Don't commit me, you understand ?"

" Perfectly, perfectly, ma'am : one kiss, dear Mrs. Beaumont, and adieu. Is my dressing-box in ? Tell him to drive fast, for I hate going slow. Dearest Mrs. Beaumont, good b'ye. I feel as if I were going for an age, though it is only for one day."

" Dear, affectionate girl ! I love *heart*—Good bye—Drive fast, as miss Hunter desires you."

Our fair politician, well satisfied with the under-

standing of her confidante, which never comprehended more than met the ear, and secure in a *chargé d'affaires*, whose powers it was never necessary to limit, stood on the steps before the house-door, deep in reverie, for some minutes after the carriage had driven away, till she was roused by seeing her son returning from his morning's ride.

CHAPTER III.

“ Will you hear a Spanish lady,
How she woo'd an English man ?
Garments gay as rich as may be,
Deck'd with jewels, she had on.”

THE SPANISH LADY'S LOVE.
Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry.

MR. BEAUMONT had just been at a neighbouring farm-house, where there lived one of Mr. Walsingham's tenants ; a man of the name of Birch, a respectable farmer, who was originally from Ireland, and whose son was at sea with captain Walsingham. The captain had taken young Birch under his particular care, at Mr. Walsingham's request.

Birch's parents had this day received a letter from their son ; which in the joy and pride of their hearts they showed to Mr. Beaumont, who was in the habit of calling at their house to inquire if they had heard any news of their son, or of captain Walsingham. Mr. Beaumont liked to read Birch's letters, because

they were written with characteristic simplicity and affection, and somewhat in the Irish idiom, which this young sailor's English education had not made him entirely forget.

LETTER FROM BIRCH TO HIS PARENTS.

“ H. M. S. l'Ambuscade.

“ HONOURED PARENTS,

“ I write this from sea, lat. N. 44. 15—long. W. 9. 45.—wind N.N.E.—to let you know you will not see me so soon as I said in my last, of the 16th. Yesterday, P.M. two o'clock, some despatches were brought to my good captain, by the Pickle sloop, which will to-morrow, wind and weather permitting, alter our destination. What the nature of them are, I cannot impart to you ; for it has not transpired beyond the lieutenants ; but whatever I do under the orders of my good captain, I am satisfied and confident all is for the best. For my own share, I long for an opportunity of fighting the French, and of showing the captain *what is in me*, and that the pains he has took to make a gentleman, and an honour to his majesty's service, of me, is not thrown away. Had he been my own father, or brother, he could not be better, or *done more*. God willing, I will never disgrace his principles, for it would be my ambition to be like him in any respect ; and he says if I behave myself as I ought, I shall soon be a lieutenant ; and a lieutenant in his majesty's navy is as good a gentleman as any in England, and has a right (tell my sister Kitty) to hand the first woman in Lon'on out of her carriage, if he pleases, and if she pleases.

“ Now we talk of ladies, and as please God we shall

soon be in action, and may not have another opportunity of writing to you this great while, for there is talk of our sailing southward with the fleet to bring the French and Spaniards to action, I think it best to send you all the news I have in this letter. But pray bid Kate, with my love, mind this, that not a word of the following is to take wind for her life, on account of my not knowing if it might be agreeable, or how it might affect my good captain, and others that shall be nameless. You must know then that when we were at —, where we were stationed six weeks and two days, waiting for the winds, and one cause or other, we used to employ ourselves, I and my captain, taking soundings (which I can't more particularly explain the nature of to you, especially in a letter); for he always took me out to attend him in preference to any other; and after he had completed his soundings, and had no further use for me in that job, I asked him leave to go near the same place in the evening to fish, which my good captain consented to (as he always does to what (duty done) can gratify me), provided I was in my ship by ten. Now you must know that there are convents in this country (which you have often heard of, Kitty, no doubt), being damnable places, where young *Catholic* women are shut up unmarried, often it is to be reasonably supposed against their wills. And there is a convent in one of the suburbs which has a high back wall to the garden of it that comes down near the strand; and it was under this wall we two used to sound, and that afterwards I used to be fishing. And one evening, when I was not thinking of any such thing, there comes over the wall a huge nosegay of flowers, with a stone in it, that made me jump. And this for three evenings running the

same way, about the same hour ; till at last one evening as I was looking up at the wall, as I had now learned to do about the time the nosegays were thrown over, saw coming down a stone tied to a string, and to the stone a letter, the words of which I can't particularly take upon me to recollect, because I gave up the paper to my captain, who desired it of me, and took no copy ; but the sense was, that in that convent there was shut up a lady, the daughter of an English gentleman by a Spanish wife, both her parents being dead, and her Spanish relations and father-confessor (or catholic priest of a man), not wishing she should get to England, where she might be what she had a right to be by birth, at least by her father's side (a *protestant*), shut her up since she was a child. And that there was a relative of hers in England, who with a wicked lawyer or attorney had got possession of her estate, and made every body believe she was dead. And so, it being seven years and more since she was heard of, she is what is called dead in law, which sort of death however won't signify if she appears again. Wherefore the letter goes on to say, she would be particularly glad to make her escape, and get over to old England. But she confesses that she is neither young nor handsome, and may be never may be rich ; therefore, that whoever helps her must do it for the sake of doing good and nothing else ; for though she would pay all expenses handsomely, she could not promise more. And that she knew the danger of the undertaking to be great ; greater for them that would carry her off even than for herself. That she knows, however, that British sailors are brave as they are generous (this part of the letter was very well indited, and went straight to my heart the minute ever I read it) ; and she wished it could

be in the power of captain Walsingham to take her under his immediate protection, and that she had taken measures so as she could escape over the wall of the garden if he would have a boat in readiness to carry her to his ship; and at the same hour next evening the stone should be let down as usual, and he might fasten his answer to it, which would be drawn up in due course. Concluding all with this, 'That she would not go at all unless captain Walsingham came for her himself (certifying himself to be himself I suppose), for she knew him to be a gentleman by reputation, and she should be safe under his protection, and so would her secret, she was confident at all events.' This was the entire and sum total of the letter. So when I had read to the end, and looked for the postscript and all, I found for my pains that the lady mistook me for my captain, or would not have written or thrown the nosegays. So I took the letter to my captain; and what he answered, and how it was settled (by signals, I suppose) between them after, it was not for me to inquire. Not a word more was said by him to me or I to him on the topic, till the very night we were to sail for England. It was then that our captain took me aside, and he says, 'Birch will, you assist me? I ask this not as your captain, so you are at liberty to do as you please. Will you help me to rescue this lady, who seems to be unjustly detained, and to carry her back safe to her country and her friends?' I told him I would do that or any thing else he bid me, confident he would never ask me to do a wrong thing; and as to the lady, I should be proud to help to carry her off to old England and her lawful friends, only I thought (if I might be so bold) it was a pity she was not young nor handsome, for his sake. At

that he smiled, and only said, ' Perhaps it was best for him as it was.' Then he settled about the boat, and who were to go, and when. It was twelve o'clock striking by the great town clock when we were under the walls of the convent, as appointed. And all was hush and silent as the grave for our very lives. For it was a matter of life or death, I promise you, and we all knew as much, and the sailors had a dread of the Inquisition upon them that was beyond all terrible ! So we watched and waited, and waited and watched so long, that we thought something must have gone wrong, or that all was found out, and the captain could not delay the ship's sailing ; and he struck his repeater, and it was within a quarter of one, and he said, ' It is too late ; we must put back.' Just then, I, that was watching with the lantern in my hand, gave notice, and first there comes down a white bundle, fastened to the stone and cord. Then the captain and I fixed the ladder of ropes, and down came the lady, as well as ever she went up, and not a word but away with her : the captain had her in a trice in our boat, safe and snug, and off we put, rowing for the bare life, all silent as ever. I think I hear the striking of our oars and the plashing of the water this minute, which we would have gladly silenced, but could not any way in nature. But none heard it, or at least took any notice against us. I can give you no idea of the terror which the lady manifested when the boat stood out to sea, at the slightest squall of wind or the least agitation of the waves ; for beside being naturally cowardly, as all or most women are for the first time at sea, here was a poor soul, who had been watching, and may be fasting, and worn out mind and body with the terror of perfecting her escape from the convent, where she

had been immured and all her life as helpless as a child. So it was wonderful she went through it as well as she did and without screaming, which should be an example to Kate and others. Glad enough even we men were when we reached the ship. There was, at that time, a silence on board you could have heard a pin drop, all being in perfect readiness for getting under weigh, the anchor a-peak, and the sails ready for dropping, and officers and sailors waiting in the greatest expectation of our boat's return. Our boat passed swiftly alongside, and great beyond belief was the astonishment of all at seeing a woman veiled, hoisted out, and in, and ushered below, half-fainting. I never felt more comfortable in my life than when we found her and ourselves safe aboard l'Ambuscade. The anchor was instantly weighed, all sail made, and the ship stood out to sea. To the lady the captain gave up his cabin: double sentries were placed, and as the captain ordered, every precaution that could shield her character in such suspicious circumstances were enforced with the utmost punctilio. I cannot describe, nor can you even conceive, Kate, the degree of curiosity shown about her; all striving to get a sight of her when she first went down, and most zealous they were to bring lights; but that would not do, for they could not see her for her veil. Yet through all we could make out that she was a fine figure of a woman at any rate, and something more than ordinary, from the air she had with her. The next day when she was sitting on deck the wind by times would blow aside her veil so as to give us glimpses of her face; when to our surprise, and I am sure to the captain's satisfaction, we found she was beyond all contradiction young and handsome. And moreover I have reason to believe

she has fine jewels with her, beside a ring from her own finger which with a very pretty action she put on his, that next day on deck, as I noticed, when nobody was minding. So that no doubt she is as much richer as she is handsomer than she made believe, contrary to the ways of other women, which is in her favour and my good captain's; for from what I can judge, after all he has done for her, she has no dislike nor objection to him.

“ I have not time to add any thing more, but my love to Kitty, and Nancy, and Tom, and Mary, and little Bess; and, honoured parents, wishing you good health as I am in, thank God, at these presents,

I am your dutiful and loving son,

JOHN BIRCH.

“ P. S. I open my letter to tell you we are going southward immediately, all in high spirits, as there is hopes of meeting the French and Spaniards. We have just hoisted the nun-lady on board an English packet. God send her and this letter safe to England.”

Mr. Beaumont might perhaps have been amused by this romantic story, and by the style in which it was told, if he had not been alarmed by the hint at the conclusion of the letter, that the lady was not indifferent to her deliverer. Now Mr. Beaumont earnestly wished that his friend captain Walsingham might become his brother-in-law; and he began to have fears about this Spanish lady, with her gratitude, her rings, and the advantages of the great interest her misfortunes and helpless condition would excite, together with the vast temptations to fall in love that might occur during the course of a voyage. Had he

taken notice of the postscript, his mind would have been somewhat relieved. On this subject Mr. Beaumont pondered all the way that he rode home, and on this subject he was still meditating when he saw his mother standing on the steps, where we left her when miss Hunter's carriage drove away.

CHAPTER IV.

"I shall in all my best obey you, madam."

HAMLET.

"Did you meet miss Hunter, my dear son?" said she.

"Yes, ma'am, I just passed the carriage in the avenue: she is going home, is not she?" said he, rather in a tone of satisfaction.

"Ah, poor thing! yes," said Mrs. Beaumont, in a most pathetic tone: "ah, poor thing!"

"Why, ma'am, what has happened to her? What's the matter?"

"Matter? O nothing!—Did I say that any thing was the matter? Don't speak so loud," whispered she: "your groom heard every word we said; stay till he is out of hearing, and then we can talk."

"I don't care if all the world hears what I say," cried Mr. Beaumont, hastily: but, as if suppressing his rising indignation, he, with a milder look and tone, added, "I cannot conceive, my dear mother, why you are always so afraid of being overheard."

"Servants, my dear, make such mischief, you know, by misunderstanding and misrepresenting

every thing they hear ; and they repeat things so oddly, and raise such strange reports !”

“ True—very true indeed, ma’am,” said Mr. Beaumont. “ You are quite right, and I beg pardon for being so hasty—I wish you could teach me a little of your patience and prudence.”

“ Prudence ! ah ! my dear Edward, ’tis only time and sad experience of the world can teach that to people of *our* open tempers. I was at your age ten times more imprudent and unsuspicious than you are.”

“ Were you, ma’am ?—But I don’t think I am unsuspicious. I was when I was a boy—I wish we could continue children always in some things. I hate suspicion in any body—but more than in any one else, I hate it in myself. And yet——”

Mr. Beaumont hesitated, and his mother instantly went on with a fluent panegyric upon the hereditary unsuspiciousness of his temper.

“ But, madam, were you not saying something to me about miss Hunter ?”

“ Was I ?—O, I was merely going to say, that I was sorry you did not know she was going this morning, that you might have taken leave of her, poor thing !”

“ Take leave of her ! ma’am : I bowed to her, and wished her a good morning, when I met her just now, and she told me she was only going to the hall for a day. Surely no greater leave-taking was requisite, when I am to see the lady again to-morrow, I presume.”

“ That is not quite so certain as she thinks, poor soul ! I told her I would send for her again to-morrow, just to keep up her spirits at leaving me. Walk this way, Edward, under the shade of the trees, for

I am dead with the heat ; and you, too, look so hot ! I say I am not so sure that it would be prudent to have her here so much, especially whilst Mr. Palmer is with us, you know——” Mrs. Beaumont paused, as if waiting for an assent, or a dissent, or a leading hint how to proceed : but her son persisting in perverse silence, she was forced to repeat, “ You know, Edward, my dear, you know ? ”

“ I don’t know, indeed, ma’am.”

“ You don’t know ! ”

“ Faith, not I, ma’am. I don’t know, for the soul of me, what Mr. Palmer’s coming has to do with miss Hunter’s going. There’s room enough in the house, I suppose, for each of them, and all of us to play our parts. As to the rest, the young lady’s coming or going is quite a matter of indifference to me, except, of course, as far as politeness and hospitality go. But all that I leave to you, who do the honours for me so well.”

Mrs. Beaumont’s ideas were utterly thrown out of their order by this speech, no part of which was exactly what she wished or expected : not that any of the sentiments it contained or suggested were new to her ; but she was not prepared to meet them thus clothed in distinct words, and in such a compact form. She had drawn up her forces for battle in an order, which this unexpectedly decisive movement of the enemy discomfited ; and a less able tactician might have been, in these circumstances, not only embarrassed, but utterly defeated : yet, however unprepared for this sudden shock, with admirable generalship our female Hannibal, falling back in the centre, admitted him to advance impetuous and triumphant, till she had him completely surrounded.

“ My being of age in a few days,” continued Mr.

Beaumont, "will not make any difference, surely; I depend upon it, that you will always invite whomever you like to this house, of which I hope, my dear mother, you will always do me the favour to be the mistress—till I marry, at least. For my wife's feelings," added he, smiling, "I can't engage, before I have her."

"And before we know who she is to be," said Mrs. Beaumont, carelessly. "Time enough, as you say, to think of that. Besides, there are few women in the world, I know scarcely one, with whom, in the relation of mother and daughter-in-law, I should wish to live. But wherever I live, my dear son, as long as I have a house, I hope you will always do me the justice and the pleasure to consider yourself as its master. Heaven knows I shall never give any other man a right to dispute with you the sovereignty of my castle, or my cottage, whichever it may be. As to the rest," pursued Mrs. Beaumont, "you cannot marry against my wishes, my dear Edward; for your wishes on this, as on all other subjects, will ever govern mine."

Her son kissed her hand with warm gratitude.

"You will not, I hope, think that I seek to prolong my regency, or to assume undue power or influence in affairs," continued Mrs. Beaumont, "if I hint to you in general terms what I think may contribute to your happiness. You must afterwards decide for yourself; and are now, as you have ever been, master, to do as you please."

"Too much—too much. I have had too much liberty, and have too little acquired the habit of commanding my will and my passions by my reason. Of this I am sensible. My excellent friend, captain Walsingham, told me, some years ago, that this was

the fault of my character, and he charged me to watch over myself; and so I have; but not so strictly, I fear, as if he had watched along with me.—Well, ma'am, you were going to give me some advice; I am all attention."

"My dear son, captain Walsingham showed his judgment more, perhaps, in pointing out causes than effects. The weakness of a fond mother, I am sensible, did indulge you in childhood, and, perhaps, more imprudently in youth, with an unlimited liberty to judge and act for yourself. Your mother's system of education came, alas! more from her heart than her head. Captain Walsingham himself cannot be more sensible of my errors than I am."

"Captain Walsingham, believe me, mother, never mentioned this in reproach to you. He is not a man to teach a son to see his mother's errors—if she had any. He always spoke of you with the greatest respect. And since I must, at my own expense, do him justice, it was, I well remember, upon some occasion where I spoke too hastily, and insisted upon my will in opposition to yours, madam, that captain Walsingham took me aside, and represented to me the fault into which my want of command over myself had betrayed me. This he did so forcibly, that I have never from that hour to this (I flatter myself), on any material occasion, forgotten the impression he made on my mind. But, madam, I interrupt you: you were going to give me your advice about——"

"No, no—no advice—no advice; you are, in my opinion, fully adequate to the direction of your own conduct. I was merely going to suggest, that, since you have not been accustomed to control from a mother, and since you have, thank Heaven! a high spirit, that would sooner break than bend, it must be

essential to your happiness to have a wife of a compliant, gentle temper ; not fond of disputing the right, or attached to her own opinions ; not one who would be tenacious of rule, and unseasonably inflexible."

" Unseasonably inflexible ! Undoubtedly, ma'am. Yet I should despise a mean-spirited wife."

" I am sure you would. But compliance that proceeds from affection, you know, can never deserve to be called mean-spirited—nor would it so appear to you. I am persuaded that there is a degree of fondness, of affection, enthusiastic affection, which disposes the temper always to a certain softness and yieldingness, which, I conceive, would be peculiarly attractive to you, and essential to your happiness : in short, I know your temper could not bear contradiction."

" O, indeed, ma'am, you are quite mistaken."

" Quite mistaken ! and at the very moment he reddens with anger, because I contradict, even in the softest, gentlest manner in my power, his opinion of himself !"

" You don't understand me, indeed you don't understand me," said Mr. Beaumont, beating with his whip the leaves of a bush which was near him.

" Either you don't understand me, or I don't understand you. I am much more able to bear contradiction than you think I am, provided it be direct. But I do not love—what I am doing at this instant," added he, smiling—" I don't love beating about the bush."

" Look there now !—Strange creatures you men are ! So like he looks to his poor father, who used to tell me that he loved to be contradicted, and yet who would not, I am sure, have lived three days with any woman who had ventured to contradict him directly. Whatever influence I obtained in his heart, and

whatever happiness we enjoyed in our union, I attribute to my trusting to my observations on his character, rather than to his own account of himself. Therefore I may be permitted to claim some judgment of what would suit your hereditary temper."

"Certainly, ma'am, certainly. But to come to the point at once, may I ask this plain question—Do you, by these reflections, mean to allude to any particular persons? Is there any woman in the world you at this instant would wish me to marry?"

"Yes—miss Walsingham."

Mr. Beaumont started with joyful surprise, when his mother thus immediately pronounced the very name he wished to hear.

"You surprise and delight me, my dear mother!"

"Surprise!—How can that be?—Surely you must know my high opinion of miss Walsingham. But——"

"But—you added *but*——"

"There is no woman who may not be taxed with a *but*—yet it is not for her friend to lower her merit. My only objection to her is——I shall infallibly affront you, if I name it."

"Name it! name it! You will not affront me."

"My only objection to her then is, her superiority. She is so superior, that, forgive me, I don't know any man, yourself not excepted, who is at all her equal."

"I think precisely as you do, and rejoice."

"Rejoice! why there I cannot sympathise with you. I own, as a mother, I should feel a little—a little mortified to see my son not the superior; and when the comparison is to be daily and hourly made, and to last for life, and all the world to see it as

well as myself. I own I have a mother's vanity. I should wish to see my son always what he has hitherto been—the superior, and master in his own house.”

Mr. Beaumont made no reply to these insinuations, but walked on in silence; and his mother, unable to determine precisely whether the vexation apparent in his countenance proceeded from disapprobation of her observations, or from their working the effect she desired upon his pride, warily waited till he should betray some decisive symptom of his feelings. But she waited in vain—he was resolved not to speak.

“There is not a woman upon earth I should wish so much to have as a daughter-in-law, a companion, and a friend, as miss Walsingham. You must be convinced,” resumed Mrs. Beaumont, “so far as I am concerned, it is the most desirable thing in the world. But I should think it my duty to put my own feelings and wishes out of the question, and to make myself prefer whoever, all things considered, my judgment tells me would make you the happiest.”

“And whom would your judgment prefer, madam?”

“Why—I am not at liberty to tell—unless I could explain all my reasons. Indeed, I know not what to say.”

“Dear madam, explain all your reasons, or we shall never understand one another, and never come to an end of these half explanations.”

Here they were interrupted by seeing Mr. Twigg, a courtly clergyman, coming towards them. Beaumont was obliged to endure his tiresome flattery upon the beauties of Beaumont Park, and upon the judicious improvements that were making, had been made, and would, no doubt, be very soon made. Mrs. Beaumont, at last, relieved his or her own impatience

by commissioning Mr. Twigg to walk round the improvements by himself. By himself she insisted it should be, that she might have his unbiassed judgment upon the two lines which had been marked for the new belt or screen; and he was also to decide whether they should call it a belt or a screen.—Honoured with this commission, he struck off into the walk to which Mrs. Beaumont pointed, and began his solitary progress.

Mr. Beaumont then urged his mother to go on with her explanation. Mrs. Beaumont thought that she could not hazard much by flattering the vanity of a man on that subject on which perhaps it is most easily flattered; therefore, after sufficient delicacy of circumlocution, she informed her son that there was a young lady who was actually dying for love of him; whose extreme fondness would make her live but in him; and who, beside having a natural ductility of character, and softness of temper, was perfectly free from any formidable superiority of intellect, and had the most exalted opinion of his capacity, as well as of his character and accomplishments; in short, such an enthusiastic adoration, as would induce that belief in the infallibility of a husband, which must secure to him the fullest enjoyment of domestic peace, power, and pre-eminence.

Mr. Beaumont seemed less moved than his mother had calculated that the vanity of man must be, by such a declaration—discovery it could not be called. “If I am to take all this seriously, madam,” replied he, laughing, “and if, *au pied de la lettre*, my vanity is to believe that this damsel is dying for love; yet, still I have so little chivalry in my nature, that I cannot understand how it would add to my happiness, to sacrifice myself to save her life. That I am well

suit to her, I am as willing as vanity can make me to believe; but how is it to be proved that the lady is suited to me?"

"My dear, these things do not admit of logical proof."

"Well—moral, sentimental, or any kind of proof you please."

"Have you no pity? and is not pity akin to love?"

"Akin! O yes, ma'am, it is akin; but for that very reason it may not be a friend—relations, you know, in these days, are as often enemies as friends."

"Vile pun! far-fetched quibble!—provoking boy!—But I see you are not in a humour to be serious, so I will take another time to talk to you of this affair."

"Now or never, ma'am, for mercy's sake!"

"Mercy's sake! you who show none—Ah! this is the way with you men; all this is play to you, but death to us."

"Death! dear ma'am; ladies, you know as well as I do, don't die of love in these days—you would not make a fool of your son."

"I could not; nor could any other woman—that is clear: but amongst us, I'm afraid we have, undesignedly indeed, but irremediably, made a fool of this poor confiding girl."

"But, ma'am, in whom did she confide? not in me, I'll swear. I have nothing to reproach myself with, thank God!—My conscience is clear; I have been as ungallant as possible. I have been as cruel as my nature would permit. I am sure no one can charge me with giving false promises—I scarcely speak—nor false hopes, for I scarcely look at the young lady."

“ So, then, you know who the young lady in question is ? ”

“ Perhaps I ought not to pretend to know. ”

“ That would be useless affectation, alas ! for I fear many know, and have seen, and heard, much more than you have—or I either. ”

Here Mrs. Beaumont observed that her son's colour changed, and that he suddenly grew serious : aware that she had now touched upon the right chord, she struck it again, “ with a master's hand and prophet's fire. ” She declared, that all the world took it for granted that miss Hunter was to be married to Mr. Beaumont ; that it was talked of every where ; that she was asked continually by her correspondents, when the marriage was to take place ?—in confirmation of which assertion, she produced bundles of letters from her pockets, from Mrs. and miss, and from lady this, and lady that.

“ Nay, ” continued she, “ if it were confined even to the circle of one's private friends and acquaintance, I should not so much mind it, for one might contradict, and have it contradicted, and one might send the poor thing away to some watering-place, and the report might die away, as reports do—sometimes. But all that sort of thing it is too late to think of now—for the thing is public ! quite public ! got into the newspapers ! Here's a paragraph I cut out this very morning from my paper, lest the poor girl should see it. The other day, I believe you saw it yourself, there was something of the same sort. ‘ We hear that as soon as he comes of age, Mr. Beaumont, of Beaumont Park, is to lead to the altar of Hymen miss Hunter, sister to sir John Hunter, of Devonshire. ’ Well,—after you left the room, Albina took

up the paper you had been reading; and when she saw this paragraph, I thought she would have dropped. I did not know what to do. Whatever I could say, you know, would only make it worse. I tried to turn it off, and talked of twenty things; but it would not do—no, no, it is too serious for that: well, though I believe she would rather have put her hand in the fire, she had the courage to speak to me about it herself.”

“ And what did she say, ma’am?” inquired Mr. Beaumont, eagerly.

“ Poor simple creature! she had but one idea—that you had seen it!—that she would not for the world you had read it. What would you think of her—she should never be able to meet you again—What could she do? It must be contradicted—somebody must contradict it. Then she worried me to have it contradicted in the papers. I told her I did not well know how that could be done, and urged that it would be much more prudent not to fix attention upon the parties by more paragraphs. But she was not in a state to think of prudence;—no. What would you think was the only idea in her mind?—If I would not write, she would write that minute herself, and sign her name. This, and a thousand wild things, she said, till I was forced to be quite angry, and to tell her she must be governed by those who had more discretion than herself. Then she was so subdued, so ashamed—really my heart bled for her, even whilst I scolded her. But it is quite necessary to be harsh with her; for she has no more foresight; nor art, nor command of herself sometimes, than a child of five years old. I assure you, I was rejoiced to get her away before Mr. Palmer came, for a new eye coming into a family sees so much one wouldn’t

wish to be seen. You know it would be terrible to have the poor young creature *commit* and expose herself to a stranger so early in life. Indeed, as it is, I am persuaded no one will ever think of marrying her, if you do not.—In worldly prudence—but of that she has not an atom—in worldly prudence she might do better, or as well; certainly; for her fortune will be very considerable. Sir John means to add to it, when he gets the Wigram estate; and the old uncle, Wigram, can't live for ever.—But poor Albina, I dare swear, does not know what fortune she is to have, nor what you have. Love! love! all for love!—and all in vain. She is certainly very much to be pitied.”

Longer might Mrs. Beaumont have continued in monologue, without danger of interruption from her son, who stood resolved to hear the utmost sum of all that she should say on the subject. Never interrupting her, he only filled certain pauses, that seemed expectant of reply, with the phrases—“ I am very sorry, indeed, ma'am”—and, “ Really, ma'am, it is out of my power to help it.” But Mrs. Beaumont observed that the latter phrase had been omitted as she proceeded—and “ *I am very sorry, indeed, ma'am,*” he repeated less as words of course, and more and more as if they came from the heart. Having so far, successfully, as she thought, worked upon her son's good-nature, and seeing her daughter through the trees coming towards them, she abruptly exclaimed, “ Promise me, at all events, dearest Edward, I conjure you; promise me that you will not make proposals *any where else*, without letting me know of it beforehand,—and give me time,” joining her hands in a supplicating attitude, “ give me but a few weeks, to prepare my poor little Albina for this sad, sad stroke!”

"I promise you, madam, that I will not directly, or indirectly, make an offer of my hand or heart to any woman, without previously letting you know my determination. And as for a few weeks, more or less—my mother, surely, need not supplicate, but simply let me know her wishes—even without her reasons, they would have been sufficient with me. Do I satisfy you now, madam?"

"More than satisfy—as you ever do, ever will, my dear son."

"But you will require no more on this subject—I must be left master of myself."

"Indubitably—certainly—master of yourself—most certainly—of course."

Mr. Beaumont was going to add something beginning with, "It is better, at once, to tell you, that I can never——" But Mrs. Beaumont stopped him with, "Hush! my dear, hush! not a word more, for here is Amelia, and I cannot talk on this subject before her, you know.—My beloved Amelia, how languid you look! I fear that, to please me, you have taken too long a walk; and Mr. Palmer won't see you in your best looks, after all.—What note is that you have in your hand?"

"A note from miss Walsingham, mamma."

"Oh! the chickenpox! take care! letters, notes, every thing may convey the infection," cried Mrs. Beaumont, snatching the paper. "How could dearest miss Walsingham be so giddy as to answer my note, after what I said in my postscript!—How did this note come?"

"By the little postboy, mamma; I met him at the porter's lodge."

"But what is all this strange thing!" said Mrs. Beaumont, after having read the note twice over.—

It contained a certificate from the parish minister, and churchwardens, apothecary, and surgeon, bearing witness, one and all, that there was no individual man, woman, or child, in the parish, or within three miles of Walsingham House, who was even under any suspicion of having the chickenpox.

“My father desires me to send Mrs. Beaumont the enclosed *clean bill of health*—by which she will find that we need be no longer subject to quarantine; and, unless some other reasons prevent our having the pleasure of seeing her, we may hope soon that she will favour us with her long promised visit.

Yours, sincerely,

MARIANNE WALSHINGHAM.”

“I am delighted,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “to find it was a false report, and that we shall not be kept, the Lord knows how long, away from the dear Walsinghams.”

“Then we can go to them to-morrow, can’t we, mamma? And I will write, and say so, shall I?” said Amelia.

“No need to write, my dear; if we promise for any particular day, and are not able to go, that seems unkind, and is taken ill, you see. And as Mr. Palmer is coming, we can’t leave him.”

“But he will go with us, surely,” said Mr. Beaumont. “The Walsinghams are as much his relations as we are; and if he comes two hundred miles to see us, he will, surely, go seven to see them.”

“True,” said Mrs. Beaumont; “but it is civil and kind to leave him to fix his own day, poor old gentleman. After so long a journey, we must allow him some rest. Consider, he can’t go galloping about as you do, dear Edward.”

"But," said Amelia, "as the Walsinghams know he is to be in the country, they will of course come to see him immediately."

"How do they know he is to be in the country?"

"I thought—I took it for granted, you told them so, mamma, when you wrote about not going to Walsingham House, on Mr. Walsingham's birthday."

"No, my dear; I was so full of the chickenpox, and terror about you, I could think of nothing else."

"Thank you, dear mother—but now that is out of the question, I had best write a line by the return of the postboy, to say, that Mr. Palmer is to be here to-day, and that he stays only one week."

"Certainly! love—but let me write about it, for I have particular reasons. And my dear, now we are by ourselves, let me caution you not to mention that Mr. Palmer can stay but one week: "in the first place, it is uncivil to him, for we are not sure of it, and it is like driving him away; and in the next place, there are reasons I can't explain to you, that know so little of the world, my dear Amelia—but, in general, it is always foolish to mention things."

"Always foolish to mention things!" cried Mr. Beaumont, smiling.

"Of this sort, I mean," said Mrs. Beaumont, a little disconcerted.

"Of what sort?" persisted her son.

"Hush! my dear; here's the postboy and the ass."

"Any letters, my good little boy? Any letters for me?"

"I has, madam, a many for the house. I does not know for who—the bag will tell," said the boy, unstrapping the bag from his shoulders.

"Give it to me, then," said Mrs. Beaumont: "I

am anxious for letters always." She was peculiarly anxious now to open the post-bag, to put a stop to a conversation which did not please her. Whilst seated on a garden-chair, under a spreading beech, our heroine, with her accustomed looks of mystery, examined the seals of her numerous and important letters, to ascertain whether they had been opened at the post-office, or whether their folds might have been pervious to any prying eye. Her son tore the covers off the newspapers; and, as he unfolded one, Amelia leaned upon his shoulder, and whispered softly, "Any news of the fleet, brother?"

Mrs. Beaumont, than whom Fine-ear himself had not quicker auditory nerves, especially for indiscreet whispers, looked up from her letters, and examined, unperceived, the countenance of Amelia, who was searching with eagerness the columns of the paper. As Mr. Beaumont turned over the leaf, Amelia looked up, and, seeing her mother's eyes fixed upon her, coloured; and from want of presence of mind to invent any thing better to say, asked if her mother wished to have the papers?

"No," said Mrs. Beaumont, coldly, "not I, Amelia; I am not such a politician as you are grown."

Amelia withdrew her attention, or at least her eyes, from the paper, and had recourse to the beech-tree, the beautiful foliage of which she studied with profound attention.

"God bless me! here's news! news of the fleet!" cried Beaumont, turning suddenly to his sister; and then recollecting himself, to his mother. "Ma'am, they say there has been a great engagement between the French and Spaniards, and the English—particulars not known yet: but, they say, ten sail of the French line are taken, and four Spaniards blown up,

and six Spanish men-of-war disabled, and a treasure-ship taken. Walsingham must have been in the engagement—My horse!—I'll gallop over this minute, and know from the Walsinghams if they have seen the papers, and if there's any thing more about it in their papers."

"Gallop! my dearest Edward," said his mother, standing in his path, "but you don't consider Mr. Palmer——"

"Damn Mr. Palmer! I beg your pardon, mother—I mean no harm to the old gentleman—friend of my father's—great respect for him—I'll be back by dinner-time, back ready to receive him—he can't be here till six—only five by me, now! Ma'am, I shall have more than time to dress, too, cool as a cucumber, ready to receive the good old fellow."

"In one short hour, my dear!—seven miles to Walsingham House, and seven back again, and all the time you will waste there, and to dress too—only consider!"

"I do consider, ma'am; and have considered every thing in the world. My horse will carry me there and back in forty-five minutes, easily, and five to spare, I'll be bound. I sha'n't 'light—so where's the paper?—I'm off."

"Well—order your horse, and leave me the paper, at least, whilst he is getting ready. Ride by this way, and you will find us here—where is this famous paragraph?"

Beaumont drew the paper crumpled from the pocket into which he had thrust it—ran off for his horse, and quickly returned mounted. "Give me the paper, good friends!—I'm off."

"Away, then, my dear; since you will heat yourself for nothing. But only let me point out to you,"

said she, holding the paper fast whilst she held it up to him, "that this whole report rests on no authority whatever; not a word of it in the gazette; not a line from the admiralty; no official account; no bulletin; no credit given to the rumour at Lloyd's; stocks the same.—And how did the news come? Not even the news-writer pretends it came through any the least respectable channel. A frigate in latitude the Lord knows what! saw a fleet in a fog—might be Spanish—might be French—might be English—spoke another frigate some days afterwards, who heard firing: well—firing says nothing. But the frigate turns this firing into an engagement, and a victory; and presently communicates the news to a collier, and the collier tells another collier, and so it goes up the Thames, to some wonder-maker, standing agape for a paragraph, to secure a dinner. To the press the news goes, just as our paper is coming out, and to be sure we shall have a contradiction and an apology in our next."

"Well, ma'am; but I will ask Mr. Walsingham what he thinks, and show him the paper."

"Do, if you like it, my dear; I never control you; but don't overheat yourself for nothing. What can Mr. Walsingham, or all the Walsinghams in the world, tell more than we can; and as to showing him the paper, you know he takes the same paper. But don't let me detain you. Amelia, who is that coming through the gate? Mr. Palmer's servant, I protest!"

"Well; it can't be, I see!" said Beaumont, dismounting.

"Take away your master's horse—quick—quick! —Amelia, my love, to dress! I must have you ready to receive your godfather's blessing. Consider, Mr.

Palmer was your father's earliest friend ; and besides, he is a relation, though distant ; and it is always a good and prudent thing to keep up relationships. Many a fine estate has come from very distant relations most unexpectedly. And even independently of all relationships, when friendships are properly cultivated, there's no knowing to what they may lead ;—not that I look to any thing of that sort here. But before you see Mr. Palmer, just as we are walking home, and quite to ourselves, let me give you some leading hints about this old gentleman's character, which I have gathered, no matter how, for your advantage, my dear children. He is a humourist, and must not be opposed in any of his oddities : he is used to be waited upon, and attended to, as all these men are who have lived in the West Indies. A *bon vivant*, of course. Edward, produce your best wines—the pilau and currie, and all that, leave to me. I had special notice of his love for a john-doree, and a john-doree I have for him. But now I am going to give you the master-key to his heart. Like all men who have made great fortunes, he loves to feel continually the importance his wealth confers ; he loves to feel that wealth does every thing ; is superior to every thing—to birth and titles especially : it is his pride to think himself, though a commoner, far above any man who condescends to take a title. He hates persons of quality ; therefore, whilst he is here, not a word in favour of any titled person. Forget the whole house of peers—send them all to Coventry—all to Coventry, remember.—And now you have the key to his heart, go and dress, to be ready for him."

Having thus given her private instructions, and advanced her secret plans, Mrs. Beaumont repaired to her toilet, well satisfied with her morning's work.

CHAPTER V.

“ Chi mi fa piu carezze che non sole ;
O m'a ingannato, o ingannar me vuole.”

“ By St. George, there's nothing like Old England for comfort !” cried Mr. Palmer, settling himself in his arm-chair in the evening ; “ nothing after all, in any part of the known world, like Old England for comfort. Why, madam, there's not another people in the universe that have in any of their languages a name even for comfort. The French have been forced to borrow it ; but now they have got it, they don't know how to use it, nor even how to pronounce it, poor devils ! Well, there's nothing like Old England for comfort.”

“ Ah ! nothing like Old England for comfort,” echoed Mrs. Beaumont, in a sentimental tone, though at that instant her thoughts were far distant from her words ; for this declaration of his love for Old England alarmed her with the notion that he might change his mind about returning immediately to Jamaica, and that he might take root again and flourish for years to come in his native soil—perhaps in her neighbourhood, to the bane of all her favourite projects. What would become of her scheme of marrying Amelia to the baronet, and her son to the docile Albina ? What would become of the scheme of preventing him from being acquainted with the Walsinghams ? For a week it might be practicable to keep them asunder by *policising*, but this could never be effected if he were to settle, or even to make any long stay, in the country. The Walsinghams

would be affronted, and then what would become of their interest in the country? His son could not be returned without that, and, worse than all the rest, Mr. Palmer might take a fancy to see these Walsinghams, who were as nearly related to him as the Beaumonts; and seeing, he might prefer; and preferring, he might possibly leave half, nay, perhaps the whole, of his large fortune to them,—and thus all her hopes and projects might at once be frustrated. Little aware of the long and perplexing trains of ideas, which his honest ejaculation in favour of his native country had raised, Mr. Palmer went on with his own comfortable thoughts.

“And of all the comforts our native land affords, I know of none so grateful to the heart,” continued he, “as good friends, which are to be found nowhere else in such perfection. A man at my time of life misses many an old friend on his return to his native country; but then he sees them still in their representatives, and loves them again in their children. Mr. Beaumont looked at me at that instant, so like his father—he is the image of what my friend was, when I first knew him.”

“I am rejoiced you see the likeness,” said Mrs. Beaumont. “Amelia, my dear, pour out the coffee.”

“And miss Beaumont, too, has just his expression of countenance, which surprises me more, in her delicate features. Upon my word, I have reason to be proud of my god-daughter, as far as appearances go; and with Englishwomen appearances, fair as they may be, seldom are even so good as the truth. There’s her father’s smile again for me—young lady, if that smile deceives, there’s no truth in woman.”

"Do not you find our coffee here very bad, compared with what has been used to abroad?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

"I do rejoice to find myself here quiet in the country," continued Mr. Palmer, without hearing the lady's question; "nothing after all like a good old English family, where every thing speaks plenty and hospitality, without waste or ostentation; and where you are received with a hearty welcome, without compliments; and let do just as you please, without form, and without being persecuted by politeness."

This was the image of an English country family impressed early upon the good old gentleman's imagination, which had remained there fresh and unchanged since the days of his youth; and he now took it for granted that he should see it realised in the family of his late friend.

"I was afraid," resumed Mrs. Beaumont, "that after being so long accustomed to a West-Indian life, you would find many things unpleasant to your feelings here. But you are so kind, so accommodating. Is it really possible that you have not, since your return to England, experienced any uncomfortable sensations, suffered any serious injury to your health, my dear sir, from the damps and chills of our climate?"

"Why, now I think of it, I have—I have a cough," said Mr. Palmer, coughing.

Mrs. Beaumont officiously shut the window.

"I do acknowledge that England is not quite so superior to all other countries in her climate as in every thing else: yet I don't 'damn the climate like a lord.' At my time of life, a man must expect to be a valetudinarian, and it would be unjust to blame

one's native climate for the man of seventy-five must live where he is not where he will ; and Dr. Y—— tells me that we can live nowhere but in the West Indies."

"O, sir, never mind Dr. Y——," exclaimed young Beaumont: "live with us in England. Many Englishmen live to a great age surely, let people say what they will of the climate."

"But, perhaps, brother," interposed Amelia, "those who, like Mr. Palmer, have lived much in a warm climate, might find a return to a cold country dangerous ; and we should consider what is best for him, not merely what is most agreeable to ourselves."

"True, my dearest Amelia," said Mrs. Beaumont; "and to be sure Dr. Y—— is one of our most skilful physicians. I could not be so rash or so selfish as to set my private wishes, or my private opinion, in opposition to Dr. Y——'s advice ; but surely, my dear sir, you won't let one physician, however eminent, send you away from us all, and banish you again from England? We have a very clever physician here, Dr. Wheeler, in whom I have the greatest confidence. In my own case, I confess, I should prefer his judgment to any of the London fashionable physicians, who are so fine and so hurried, that they can't take time to study one's particular constitution, and hear all one has to say to them. Now that is Wheeler's great excellence—and I should so like to hear his opinion. I am sure, if he gives it against me, I will not say a word more: if he decides for Jamaica, I may be vexed, but I should make it a point of conscience to submit, and not to urge my good friend to stay in England at his own peril. Happy they who can live where

they please, and their fortune puts it in their power to purchase any estate, and to combine the comforts and luxuries of all countries."

Nothing more was said upon the subject: Mrs. Beaumont turned the conversation to the different luxuries of the West and East Indies. Mr. Palmer, fatigued by his journey, retired early to rest, little dreaming that his kind hostess waked, whilst he slept, for the purpose of preparing a physician to give a proper opinion upon his case. Mrs. Beaumont left a note to her favourite Dr. Wheeler, to be sent very early in the morning. As if by accident, the doctor dropped in at breakfast time, and Mrs. Beaumont declared that it was the luckiest chance imaginable, that he should happen to call just when she was wishing to see him. When the question in debate was stated to him, he, with becoming gravity of countenance and suavity of manner, entered into a discussion upon the effect of hot and cold climates upon the solids, and fluids, and nervous system in general; then upon English constitutions in particular; and, lastly, upon *idiosyncrasies*.

This last word cost Mr. Palmer half his breakfast: on hearing it he turned down his cup with a profound sigh, and pushed his plate from him; indications which did not escape the physician's demure eye. Gaining confidence from the weakness of the patient, Dr. Wheeler now boldly pronounced, that, in his opinion, any gentleman, who after having habituated himself long to a hot climate, as Jamaica, for instance, should come late in life to reside in a colder climate, as England, for example, must run very great hazard indeed; nay, he could almost venture to predict, would fall a victim to the sudden tension of the lax fibres.

Though a man of sound good sense in most things, Mr. Palmer's weakness was, on medical subjects, as great as his ignorance; his superstitious faith in physicians was as implicit as either Dr. Wheeler or Mrs. Beaumont could desire.

"Then," said Mr. Palmer, with a sigh still deeper than the first—for the first was for himself, and the second for his country—"then England, Old England! farewell for ever! All my judges pronounce sentence of transportation upon me!"

Mr. Beaumont and Amelia, in eager and persuasive tones of remonstrance and expostulation, at once addressed the doctor, to obtain a mitigation or suspension of his sentence. Dr. Wheeler, albeit unused to the imperative mood, reiterated his *dictum*. Though little accustomed to hold his opinion against the arguments or the wishes of the rich and fair, he, upon this occasion, stood his ground against miss and Mr. Beaumont wonderfully well for nearly five minutes; till, to his utter perplexity and dismay, he saw Mrs. Beaumont appear amongst his assailants.

"Well, I said I would submit, and not say a word, if Dr. Wheeler was against me," she began; "but I cannot sit by silent: I must protest against this cruel, cruel decree, so contrary too to what I hoped and expected would be Dr. Wheeler's opinion."

Poor Dr. Wheeler twinkled and seemed as if he would have rubbed his eyes, not sure whether he was awake or in a dream. In his perplexity, he apprehended that he had misunderstood Mrs. Beaumont's note, and he now prepared to make his way round again through the solids and the fluids, and the whole nervous system, till, by favour of *idiosyncrasy*, he

hoped to get out of his difficulty, and to allow Mr. Palmer to remain on British ground. Mrs. Beaumont's face, in spite of her powers of simulation, lengthened and lengthened, and darkened and darkened, as he proceeded in his recantation ; but, when the exception to the general axiom was fairly made out, and a clear permit to remain in England granted, by such high medical authority, she forced a smile, and joined loudly in the general congratulations. Whilst her son was triumphing and shaking hands with Mr. Palmer, she slipped down stairs after Dr. Wheeler.

" Ah, doctor ! What have you done ! Ruined me ! ruined me ! Didn't you read my note ? Didn't you *understand* it ?—I thought a word to the wise was enough."

" Why !—Then it was as I understood it at first ? So I thought ; but then I fancied I must be mistaken afterwards ; for when I expected support, my dear madam, you opposed my opinion in favour of Jamaica more warmly than any one, and what was I to think ?"

" To think ! Oh, my dear doctor, you might have guessed that was only a sham opposition."

" But, my dear ma'am," cried Dr. Wheeler, who, though the mildest man, was now worked up to something like indignation, " my dear ma'am—sham upon sham is too much for any man !"

The doctor went down stairs murmuring. Thus, by excess of hypocrisy, our heroine disgusted even her own adherents, in which she has the honour to resemble some of the most wily politicians famous in English history. But she was too wise ever to let any one who could serve or injure her go discontented out of her presence.

"My dear, good Dr. Wheeler, I never saw you angry before. Come, come," cried Mrs. Beaumont, sliding a *douceur* into his hand, "friends must not be vexed for trifles; it was only a mistake *de part et d'autre*, and you'll return here to-morrow, in your way home, and breakfast with us; and now we understand one another. And," added she, in a whisper "we can talk over things, and have your cool judgment best, when only you, and I, and Mr. Palmer, are present. You comprehend."

Those who practise many manœuvres, and carry on many intrigues at the same time, have this advantage, that if one fails, the success of another compensates for the disappointment. However she might have been vexed by this slight *contre-temps* with Dr. Wheeler, Mrs. Beaumont had ample compensation of different sorts this day; some due to her own exertions, some owing to accident. Her own exertions prevented her dear Albina Hunter from returning; for Mrs. Beaumont never sent the promised carriage—only a note of apology—a nail had run into one of the coach-horse's feet. To accident she owed that the Walsinghams were not at home when her son galloped over to see them the next morning, and to inquire what news from captain Walsingham. That day's paper also brought a contradiction of the report of the engagement and victory; so that Mrs. Beaumont's apprehensions on this subject were allayed; and she had no doubt that, by proper management, with a sufficient number of notes and messages, misunderstandings, lame horses, and crossings upon the road, she might actually get through the week without letting the Walsinghams see Mr. Palmer; or at least without more than a *vis*, or a morning visit, from which no great danger could be apprehended.

"Few, indeed, have so much character," thought she, "or so much dexterity in showing it, as to make a dangerous impression in the course of a formal morning visit."

CHAPTER VI.

"Ah ! c'est mentir tant soit peu ; j'en conviens ;
C'est un grand mal—mais il produit un bien."

VOLTAIRE.

THE third day went off still more successfully. Dr. Wheeler called at breakfast, frightened Mr. Palmer out of his senses about his health, and convinced him that his life depended upon his immediate return to the climate of Jamaica :—so this point was decided.

Mrs. Beaumont, calculating justly that the Walsinghams would return Mr. Beaumont's visit, and come to pay their respects to Mr. Palmer this morning, settled, as soon as breakfast was over, a plan of operations which should keep Mr. Palmer out till dinner-time. He must see the charming drive which her son had made round his improvements ; and she must have the pleasure of showing it to him herself ; and she assured him that he might trust to her driving.

So into Mrs. Beaumont's garden-chair he got ; and when she had him fairly prisoner, she carried him far away from all danger of intruding visitors. It may readily be supposed that our heroine made good use of the five or six hours' leisure for manœuvring which she thus secured.

So frank and cordial was this simple-hearted old

man, any one but Mrs. Beaumont would have thought that with him no manœuvring was necessary ; that she need only have trusted to his friendship and generosity, and have directly told him her wishes. He was so prepossessed in her favour, as being the widow of his friend, that he was almost incapable of suspecting her of any unhandsome conduct ; besides, having had little converse with modern ladies, his imagination was so prepossessed with the old-fashioned picture of a respectable widow lady and guardian mother, that he took it for granted Mrs. Beaumont was just like one of the good matrons of former times, like lady Bountiful, or lady Lizard ; and, as such, he spoke to her of her family concerns, in all the openness of a heart which knew no guile.

“ Now, my good mistress Beaumont, you must look upon me just as my friend the colonel would have done ; as a man, who has your family interests at heart just as much as if I were one of yourselves. And let me into all your little affairs, and trust me with all your little plans, and let us talk over things together, and settle how every thing can be done for the best, for the young people. You know, I have no relations in the world but your family and the Walsinghams, of whom, by the by, I know nothing. No one living has any claim upon me : I can leave or give my own just as I please ; and you and yours are, of course, my first objects—and for the how, and the what, and the when, I must consult you ; and only beg you to keep it in mind, that I would as soon *give* as *bequeath*, and rather ; for as to what a man leaves to his friends, he can only have the satisfaction of thinking that they will be the better for him after he is dead and gone, which is

but cold comfort; but what he gives, he has the warm comfort of seeing them enjoy whilst he is alive with them."

"Such a generous sentiment!" exclaimed Mrs. Beaumont, "and so unlike persons in general who have large fortunes at their disposal! I feel so much obliged, so excessively——"

"Not at all, not at all, not at all—no more of that, no more of that, my good lady. The colonel and I were friends; so there can be no obligation between us, nor thanks, nor speeches. But, just as if you were talking to yourself, tell me your mind. And if there are any little embarrassments that the son may want to clear off on coming of age; or if there's any thing wanting to your dower, my dear madam; or if there should be any marriages in the wind, where a few thousands, more or less, might be the making or the breaking of a heart;—let me hear about it all: and do me the justice to let me have the pleasure of making the young folks, and the old folks too, happy their own way; for I have no notion of insisting on all people being happy my way—no, no! I've too much English liberty in me for that; and I'm sure, you, my good lady, are as great a foe as I am to all family managements and mysteries, where the old don't know what the young do, nor the young what the old think. No, no—that's all nonsense, and French convent work—nothing like a good Old English family. So, my dear mistress Beaumont, out with it all, and make me one of yourselves, free of the family from this minute. Here's my hand and heart upon it—an old friend may presume so far."

This frankness would have opened any heart except Mrs. Beaumont's; but it is the misfortune of artful

people that they cannot believe others to be artless: either they think simplicity of character folly; or else they suspect that openness is only affected, as a bait to draw them into snares. Our heroine balanced for a moment between these two notions. She could not believe Mr. Palmer to be an absolute fool,—no; his having made such a large fortune forbade that thought. Then he must have thrown himself thus open merely to *try her*, and to come at the knowledge of debts and embarrassments, which, if brought to light, would lower his opinion of the prudence of the family.

“My excellent friend, to be candid with you,” she began, “there is no need of your generosity at present, to relieve my son from any embarrassments; for I know that he has no debts whatever. And I am confident he will make my jointure every thing, and more than every thing, I could desire. And, as to marriages, my Amelia is so young, there’s time enough to consider.”

“True, true; and she does well to take time to consider. But though I don’t understand these matters much, she looks mightily like the notion I have of a girl that’s a little bit in love.”

“In love! O my dear sir! you don’t say so—In love?”

“Why, I suppose I should not say *in love*; there’s some other way of expressing it come into fashion since my time, no doubt. And even then, I know that was not to be said of a young lady, till signing and sealing day; but it popped out, and I can’t get it back again, so you must even let it pass. And what harm? for you know, madam, without love, what would become of the world!—though I was jilted once and away, I acknowledge—but forgive and

forget. I don't like the girl a whit the worse for being a little bit tender-hearted. For I'm morally certain, even from the little I have heard her say, and from the way she has been brought up, and from her being her father's daughter and her mother's, madam, she could not fix her affections on any one that would not do honour to her choice, or—which is only saying the same thing in other words—that you and I should not approve."

"Ah! there's the thing!" said Mrs. Beaumont, sighing.

"Why now I took it into my head from a blush I saw this morning, though how I came to notice it I don't know, for to my recollection I have not noticed a girl's blushing before these twenty years—but, to be sure, here I have as near an interest, almost, as if she was my own daughter—I say, from the blush I saw this morning, when young Beaumont was talking of the gallop he had taken to inquire about captain Walsingham, I took it into my head that he was the happy man."

"O! my dear sir, he never made any proposals for Amelia." That was strictly true. "Nor, I am sure, never thought of it, as far as ever I heard."

The saving clause of "*as far as ever I heard*," prevented this last assertion from coming under that description of falsehoods denominated downright lies.

"Indeed, how could he?" pursued Mrs. Beaumont, "for you know he is no match for Amelia; he has nothing in the world but his commission. No; there never was any proposal from that quarter; and, of course, it is impossible my daughter could think of a man who has no thoughts of her."

"You know best, my good madam; I merely spoke at random. I'm the worst guesser in the world,

especially on these matters: what people tell me, I know; and neither more nor less."

Mrs. Beaumont rejoiced in the simplicity of her companion. "Then, my good friend, it is but fair to tell you," said she, "that Amelia has an admirer."

"A lover, hey! Who?"

"Ah, there's the misfortune; it is a thing I never can consent to."

"Ha! then now it is out! There's the reason the girl blushes, and is so absent at times."

A plan now occurred to Mrs. Beaumont's scheming imagination, which she thought the masterpiece of policy. She determined to account for whatever symptoms of embarrassment Mr. Palmer might observe in her daughter, by attributing them to a thwarted attachment for sir John Hunter; and Mrs. Beaumont resolved to make a merit to Mr. Palmer of opposing this match, because the lover was a baronet, and she thought that Mr. Palmer would be pleased by her showing an aversion to the thoughts of her daughter's marrying a *sprig of quality*. This ingenious method of paying her court to her open-hearted friend, at the expense equally of truth and of her daughter, she executed with her usual address.

"Well, I am heartily glad, my dear good madam, to find that you have the same prejudices against sprigs of quality that I have. One good commoner is worth a million of them, to my mind. So I told a puppy of a nephew of mine, who would go and buy a baronetage, forsooth——disinherited him! but he is dead, poor puppy."

"Poor young man! But this is all new to me," said Mrs. Beaumont, with well-feigned surprise.

"But did not you know, my dear madam, that I had a nephew, and that he is dead?"

“O, yes; but not the particulars.”

“No; the particulars I never talk of—not to the poor dog’s credit. It’s well he’s dead, for if he had lived, I am afraid I should have forgiven him. No, no, I never would. But there is no use in thinking any more of that. What were we saying? O, about your Amelia—our Amelia, let me call her. If she is so much attached, poor thing, to this man, though he is a baronet, which I own is against him to my fancy, yet, it is to be presumed, he has good qualities to balance that, since she values him; and young people must be young, and have their little foolish prepossessions for title, and so forth. To be sure I should have thought my friend’s daughter above that, of such a good family as she is, and with such good sense as she inherits too. But we have all our foibles, I suppose. And since it is so with Amelia, why do let me see this baronet-swain of hers, and let me try what good I can find out in him, and let me bring myself, if I can, over my prejudices. And then you, my dear madam, so good and kind a mother as you are, will make an effort too on your part; for we must see the girl happy, if it is not out of all sense and reason. And if the man be worthy of her, it is not his fault that he is a sprig of quality; and we must forgive and forget, and give our consent, my dear Mrs. Beaumont.”

“And would you ever give your consent to her marrying sir John Hunter?” cried Mrs. Beaumont, breathless with amazement, and for a moment thrown off her guard so as to speak quite naturally. The sudden difference in her tone and manner struck even her unsuspecting companion, and he attributed it to displeasure at this last hint.

“Why, my very dear good friend’s wife, forgive

me," said he, "for this interference, and for, as it seems, opposing your opinion about your daughter's marriage, which no man has a right to do—but if you ask me plump whether I could forgive her for marrying sir John Hunter, I answer, for I can speak nothing but the truth, I would, if he is a worthy man."

"I thought," said Mrs. Beaumont, astonished, "you disinherited your own nephew, because he took a baronet's title against your will."

"Bless you! no, my dear madam—that did displease me, to be sure—but that was the least cause of displeasure I had. I let the world fancy and say what they would, rather than bring faults to light.—But no more about that."

"But did not you take an oath that you would never leave a shilling of your fortune to any *sprig of quality*?"

"Never! my dearest madam! never," cried Mr. Palmer, laughing. "Never was such a gander. See what oaths people put into one's mouth."

"And what lies the world tells," said Mrs. Beaumont.

"And believes," said Mr. Palmer, with a sly smile.

The surprise that Mrs. Beaumont felt was mixed with a strange and rapid confusion of other sentiments, regret for having wasted such a quantity of contrivance and manœuvring against an imaginary difficulty. All this arose from her too easy belief of *secret underhand information*.

Through the maze of artifice in which she had involved affairs, she now, with some difficulty, perceived that plain truth would have served her purpose better. But regret for the past was not in the

least mixed with any thing like remorse or penitence; on the contrary, she instantly began to consider how she could best profit by her own wrong. She thought she saw two of her favourite objects almost within her reach, Mr. Palmer's fortune, and the future title for her daughter: no obstacle seemed likely to oppose the accomplishment of her wishes, except Amelia's own inclinations: these she thought she could readily prevail upon her to give up; for she knew that her daughter was both of a timid and of an affectionate temper; that she had never in any instance withstood, or even disputed, her maternal authority; and that dread of her displeasure had often proved sufficient to make Amelia suppress or sacrifice her own feelings. Combining all these reflections with her wonted rapidity, Mrs. Beaumont determined what her play should now be. She saw, or thought she saw, that she ought, either by gentle or strong means, to lure or intimidate Amelia to her purpose; and that, while she carried on this part of the plot with her daughter in private, she should appear to Mr. Palmer to yield to his persuasions by degrees, to make the young people happy their own way, and to be persuaded reluctantly out of her aversion to *sprigs of quality*. To be sure, it would be necessary to give fresh explanations and instructions to sir John Hunter, through his sister, with the new parts that he and she were to act in this domestic drama. As soon as Mrs. Beaumont returned from her airing, therefore, she retired to her own apartment, and wrote a note of explanation, with a proper proportion of sentiment and *verbiage*, to her dear Albina, begging to see her and sir John Hunter the very next day. The horse, which had been lamed by the nail, now, of course, had recovered; and it was found by Mrs. Beaumont

that she had been misinformed, and that he had been lamed only by sudden cramp. Any excuse she knew would be sufficient, in the present state of affairs, to the young lady, who was more ready to be deceived than even our heroine was disposed to deceive. Indeed, as Machiavel says, "as there are people willing to cheat, there will always be those who are ready to be cheated."

CHAPTER VII.

"Vous m'enchantez, mais vous m'épouvantez ;
Ces pièges là sont-ils bien ajustés ?
Craignez vous point de vous laisser surprendre
Dans les filets que vos mains savant tendres ?"

VOLTAIRE.

To prepare Amelia to receive sir John Hunter *properly* was Mrs. Beaumont's next attempt ; for as she had represented to Mr. Palmer that her daughter was attached to sir John, it was necessary that her manner should in some degree accord with this representation, that at least it should not exhibit any symptoms of disapprobation or dislike : whatever coldness or reserve might appear, it would be easy to attribute to bashfulness and dread of Mr. Palmer's observation. When Amelia was undressing at night, her mother went into her room ; and, having dismissed the maid, threw herself into an arm-chair, and exclaimed, half-yawning, "How tired I am !— No wonder, such a long airing as we took to-day. But, my dear Amelia, I could not sleep to-night

without telling you how glad I am to find that you are such a favourite with Mr. Palmer."

"I am glad he likes me," said Amelia; "I am sure I like him. What a benevolent, excellent man he seems to be."

"Excellent, excellent—the best creature in the world!—And so interested about you! and so anxious that you should be well and soon established; almost as anxious about it as I am myself."

"He is very good—and you are very good, mamma; but there is no occasion that I should be *soon established*, as it is called—is there?"

"That is the regular answer, you know, in these cases, from every young lady that ever was born, in or out of a book within the memory of man. But we will suppose all that to be said prettily on your part, and answered properly on mine: so give me leave to go on to something more to the purpose; and don't look so alarmed, my love. You know I am not a hurrying person; you shall take your own time, and every thing shall be done as you like, and the whole shall be kept amongst ourselves entirely; for nothing is so disadvantageous and distressing to a young woman as to have these things talked of in the world long before they take place."

"But, ma'am!—Surely there is no marriage determined upon for me, without my even knowing it."

"Determined upon!—O dear, no, my darling. You shall decide every thing for yourself."

"Thank you, mother; now you are kind indeed."

"Indubitably, my dearest Amelia, I would not decide on any thing without consulting you: for I have the greatest dependence on your prudence and judgment. With a silly romantic girl, who had no

discretion, I should certainly think it my duty to do otherwise ; and if I saw my daughter following head-long some idle fancy of fifteen, I should interpose my authority at once ; and say, It must not be. But I know my Amelia so well, that I am confident she will judge as prudently for herself as I could for her ; and, indeed, I am persuaded that our opinions will be now, as they almost always are, my sweet girl, the same."

" I hope so, mamma,—but ——"

" Well, well, I'll allow a maidenly *but*—and you will allow that sir John Hunter shall be the man at last."

" O, mamma, that can never be," said Amelia, with much earnestness.

" *Never*—A young lady's *never*, Amelia, I will allow too. Don't interrupt me, my dear—but give me leave to tell you again, that you shall have your own time—Mr. Palmer has given his consent and approbation."

" Consent and approbation !" cried Amelia. " And is it come to this ? without even consulting me ! And is this the way I am left to judge for myself ?—Oh, mother ! mother ! what will become of me ?"

Amelia, who had long had experience that it was vain for her to attempt to counteract or oppose any scheme that her mother had planned, sat down at this instant in despair : but even from despair she took courage ; and, rising suddenly, exclaimed, " I never can nor will marry sir John Hunter—for I love another person—mother, you know I do—and I will speak truth, and abide by it, let the consequences be what they may."

" Well, my dear, don't speak so loud, at all events ; for though it may be very proper to speak the truth.

it is not necessary that the whole universe should hear it. You speak of another attachment—is it possible that you allude to captain Walsingham? But captain Walsingham has never proposed for you, nor even given you any reason to think he would; or if he has, he must have deceived me in the grossest manner."

"He is incapable of deceiving any body," said Amelia. "He never gave me any reason to think he would propose for me; nor ever made the slightest attempt to engage my affections. You saw his conduct: it was always uniform. He is incapable of any double or underhand practices."

"In the warmth of your eulogium on captain Walsingham, you seem, Amelia, to forget that you reflect, in the most severe manner, upon yourself: for what woman, what young woman especially, who has either delicacy, pride, or prudence, can avow that she loves a man, who has never given, even by her own statement of the matter, the slightest reason to believe that he thinks of her."

Amelia stood abashed, and for some instants incapable of reply: but at last, approaching her mother, and hiding her face, as she hung over her shoulder, she said, in a low and timid voice, "It was only to my mother—I thought that could not be wrong—and when it was to prevent a greater wrong, the engaging myself to another person."

"Engaging yourself, my foolish child; but did I not tell you that you should have your own time?"

"But no time, mother, will do."

"Try, my dear love; that is all I ask of you; and this you cannot, in duty, in kindness, in prudence, or with decency, refuse me."

"Cannot I?"

“ Indeed you cannot. So say not a word more that can lessen the high opinion I have of you ; but show me that you have a becoming sense of your own and of female dignity, and that you are not the poor, mean-spirited creature, to pine for a man who disdains you.”

“ Disdain ! I never saw any disdain. On the contrary, though he never gave me reason to think so, I cannot help fancying——”

“ That he likes you—And yet he never proposed for you ! Do not believe it—a man may coquet as well as a woman, and often more ; but till he makes his proposal, never, if you have any value for your own happiness or dignity, fancy for a moment that he loves you.”

“ But he cannot marry, because he is so poor.”

“ True—and if so, what stronger argument can be brought against your thinking of him ?”

“ I do not think of him—I endeavour not to think of him.”

“ That is my own girl ! Depend upon it, he thinks not of you. He is all in his profession—prefers it to every woman upon earth. I have heard him say he would not give it up for any consideration. All for glory, you see ; nothing for love.”

Amelia sighed. Her mother rose, and kissing her, said, as if she took every thing she wished for granted, “ So, my Amelia, I am glad to see you reasonable, and ready to show a spirit that becomes you—Sir John Hunter breakfasts here to-morrow.”

“ But,” said Amelia, detaining her mother, who would have left the room, “ I cannot encourage sir John Hunter, for I do not esteem him ; therefore I am sure I can never love him.”

"You cannot encourage sir John Hunter, Amelia?" replied Mrs. Beaumont. "It is extraordinary that this should appear to you an impossibility the very moment the gentleman proposes for you. It was not always so. Allow me to remind you of a ball last year, where you and I met both sir John Hunter and captain Walsingham; as I remember, you gave all your attention that evening to sir John."

"Oh, mother, I am ashamed of that evening—I regret it more than any evening of my life. I did wrong, very wrong; and bitterly have I suffered for it, as people always do, sooner or later, by deceit. I was afraid that you should see my real feelings; and, to conceal them, I, for the first and last time of my life, acted like a coquette. But if you recollect, dear mother, the very next day I confessed the truth to you. My friend, miss Walsingham, urged me to have the courage to be sincere."

"Miss Walsingham! On every occasion, I find the secret influence of these Walsinghams operating in my family," cried Mrs. Beaumont, from a sudden impulse of anger, which threw her off her guard.

"Surely their influence has always been beneficial to us all. To me, miss Walsingham's friendship has been of the greatest service."

"Yes; by secretly encouraging you, against your mother's approbation, in a ridiculous passion for a man who neither can nor will marry you."

"Far from encouraging me, madam, in any thing contrary to your wishes—and far from wishing to do any thing secretly, miss Walsingham never spoke to me on this subject but once; and that was to advise me strongly not to conceal the truth from you, and not to make use of any artifices or manœuvres."

“Possibly, very possibly ; but I presume you could conduct yourself properly without miss Walsingham’s interference or advice.”

“I thought, mamma, you liked miss Walsingham particularly, and that you wished I should cultivate her friendship.”

“Certainly ; I admire miss Walsingham extremely, and wish to be on the best terms with the family ; but I will never permit any one to interfere between me and my children. We should have gone on better without advisers.”

“I am sure her advice and friendship have preserved me from many faults, but never led me into any. I might, from timidity, and from fear of your superior address and abilities, have become insincere and artful ; but she has given me strength of mind enough to bear the present evil, and to dare at all hazards to speak the truth.”

“But, my dearest Amelia,” said Mrs. Beaumont, softening her tone, “why so warm ? What object can your mother have but your good ? Can any miss Walsingham, or any other friend upon earth, have your interest so much at heart as I have ? Why am I so anxious, if it is not from love to you ?”

Amelia was touched by her mother’s looks and words of affection, and acknowledged that she had spoken with too much warmth.

Mrs. Beaumont thought she could make advantage of this moment.

“Then, my beloved child, if you are convinced of my affection for you, show at least some confidence in me in return : show some disposition to oblige me. Here is a match I approve ; here is an establishment every way suitable.”

“But why, mamma, must I be married ?” in-

terraptured Amelia. "I will not think, at least I will try not to think, of any one, of whom you do not approve; but I cannot marry any other man while I feel such a partiality for —. So, dear mother, pray do not let sir John Hunter come here any more on my account. It is not necessary that I should marry."

"It is necessary, however," said Mrs. Beaumont, withdrawing her hand haughtily, and darting a look of contempt and anger upon her daughter, "it is necessary, however, that I should be mistress in my own house, and that I should invite here whomever I please. And it is necessary that you should receive them without airs, and with politeness. On this, observe, I insist, and will be obeyed."

Mrs. Beaumont would receive no reply, but left the room seemingly in great displeasure: but even half her anger was affected, to intimidate this gentle girl.

Sir John Hunter and his sister arrived to breakfast. Mrs. Beaumont played her part admirably; so that she seemed to Mr. Palmer only to be enduring sir John from consideration for her daughter, and from compliance with Mr. Palmer's own request that she would try what could be done to make the young people happy; yet she, with infinite address, *drew sir John out*, and dexterously turned every thing he said into what she thought would please Mr. Palmer, though all the time she seemed to be misunderstanding, or confuting him. Mr. Palmer's attention, which was generally fixed exclusively on one object at a time, had ample occupation in studying sir John, whom he examined, for Amelia's sake, with all the honest penetration which he possessed. Towards Amelia herself he scarcely ever looked; for, without

any refinement of delicacy, he had sufficient feeling and sense to avoid what he thought would embarrass a young lady. Amelia's silence and reserve appeared to him, therefore, as her politic mother had foreseen, just what was natural and proper. He had been told that she was attached to sir John Hunter; and the idea of doubting the truth of what Mrs. Beaumont had asserted could not enter his confiding mind.

In the mean time, our heroine, to whom the conduct of a double intrigue was by no means embarrassing, did not neglect the affairs of her dear Albina: she had found time before breakfast, as she met miss Hunter getting out of her carriage, to make herself sure that her notes of explanation had been understood; and she now, by a multitude of scarcely perceptible innuendoes, and seemingly suppressed looks of pity, contrived to carry on the representation she had made to her son of this damsel's helpless and lovelorn state. Indeed, the young lady appeared as much in love as could have been desired for stage effect, and rather more than was necessary for propriety. All Mrs. Beaumont's art, therefore, was exerted to throw a veil of becoming delicacy over what might have been too glaring, by hiding half to improve the whole. Where there was any want of management on the part of her young coadjutrix, she, with exquisite skill, made advantage even of these errors by looks and sighs, that implied almost as emphatically as words could have said to her son—"You see what I told you is too true. The simple creature has not art enough to conceal her passion. She is undone in the eyes of the world, if you do not confirm what report has said."

This she left to work its natural effect upon the vanity of man. And in the midst of these multiplied manœuvres, Mrs. Beaumont sat with ease and unconcern, sometimes talking to one, sometimes to another; so that a stranger would have thought her a party uninterested in all that was going forward, and might have wondered at her blindness or indifference.

But, alas! notwithstanding her utmost art, she failed this day in turning and twisting sir John Hunter's conversation and character so as to make them agreeable to Mr. Palmer. This she knew by his retiring at an early hour at night, as he sometimes did when company was not agreeable to him. His age gave him this privilege. Mrs. Beaumont followed, to inquire if he would not wish to *take something* before he went to rest.

"By St. George, madam Beaumont, you are right," said Mr. Palmer, "you are right, in not liking this baronet. I'm tired of him—sick of him—can't like him!—sorry for it, since Amelia likes him. But what can a daughter of colonel Beaumont's find in this man to be pleased with? He is a baronet, to be sure, but that is all. Tell me, my good madam, what it is the girl likes in him?"

Mrs. Beaumont could only answer by an equivocal smile, and a shrug, that seemed to say—there's no accounting for these things.

"But, my dear madam," pursued Mr. Palmer, "the man is neither handsome nor young: he is old enough for her father, though he gives himself the airs of a youngster; and his manners are—I can allow for fashionable manners. But, madam, it is his character I don't like—selfish—cold—designing—not a generous thought, not a good feeling about him.

You are right, madam, quite right. In all his conversation such meanness, and even in what he means for wit, such a contempt of what is fair and honourable! Now, that fellow does not believe that such a thing as virtue or patriotism, honour or friendship, exists. The jackanapes!—and as for love! why, madam, I'm convinced he is no more in love with the girl than I am, nor so much, ma'am, nor half so much!—does not feel her merit, does not value her accomplishments, does not——Madam! madam! he is thinking of nothing but himself, and her fortune—fortune! fortune! fortune! that's all. The man's a miser. Madam, they that know no better fancy that there are none but old misers; but I can tell them there are young misers, and middle-aged misers, and misers of all ages. They say such a man can't be a miser, because he is a spendthrift; but, madam, you know a man can be both—yes, and that's what many of your young men of fashion are, and what, I'll engage, this fellow is. And can Amelia like him? my poor child! and does she think he loves her? my poor, poor child! how can she be so blind? but love is always blind, they say. I've a great mind to take her to task, and ask her, between ourselves, what it is she likes in her baronet."

"O, my dear sir! she would sink to the centre of the earth if you were to speak. For Heaven's sake, don't take her to task, foolish as she is; besides, she would be so angry with me for telling you."

"Angry? the gipsy! Am not I her godfather and her guardian? though I could not act because I was abroad, yet her guardian I was left by her father, and love her too as well as I should a daughter of her father's—and she to have secrets and mysteries! that would be worse than all the rest, for mysteries are

what I abhor. Madam, wherever there are secrets and mysteries in a family, take my word for it there is something wrong."

"True, my dear sir; but Amelia has no idea of mysteries or art. I only meant that young girls, you know, will be ashamed on these occasions, and we must make allowances. So do not speak to her, I conjure you."

"Well, madam, you are her mother, and must know best. I have only her interest at heart: but I won't speak to her, since it will so distress her. But what shall be done about this lover? You are quite right about him, and I have not a word more to say."

"But I declare, I think you judge him too harshly. Though I am not inclined to be his friend, yet I must do him the justice to say, he has more good qualities than you allow, or rather than you have seen yet. He is passionately fond of Amelia. O, there you're wrong, quite wrong; he is passionately in love, whatever he may pretend to the contrary."

"Pretend! and why should the puppy pretend not to be in love?"

"Pride, pride and fashion. Young men are so governed by fashion, and so afraid of ridicule. There's a set of *fashionables* now, with whom love is a *bore*, you know."

"I know! no, indeed, I know no such thing," said Mr. Palmer. "But this I know, that I hate pretences of all sorts; and if the man is in love, I should, for my part, like him the better for showing it."

"So he will, when you know him a little better. You are quite a stranger, and he is bashful."

"Bashful! Never saw so confident a man in any untry."

"But he is shy under all that."

"Under! But I don't like characters where every thing is under something different from what appears at top."

"Well, take a day or two more to study him. Though I am his enemy, I must deal fairly by him, for poor Amelia's sake."

"You are a good mother, madam, an indulgent mother, and I honour and love you for it. I'll follow your example, and bear with this spendthrift-misercorcomb sprig of quality for a day or two more, and try to like him, for Amelia's sake. But, if he's not worthy of her, he sha'n't have her, by St. George, he shall not—shall he, madam?"

"O, no, no; good night, my good sir."

What the manœuvres of the next day might have effected, and how far sir John Hunter profited by the new instructions which were given to him in consequence of this conversation, can never be accurately ascertained, because the whole united plan of operations was disturbed by a new, unforeseen event.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Un volto senza senno,
Un petto senza core, un cor serz' alma,
Un' alma senza fede."

GUARINI.

"HERE'S glorious news of captain Walsingham!" cried young Beaumont; "I always knew he would distinguish himself if he had an opportunity; and, thank God! he has had as fine an opportunity as

heart could wish. Here, mother! here, Mr. Palmer, is an account of it in this day's paper! and here is a letter from himself, which Mr. Walsingham has just sent me."

"O, give *me* the letter," cried Mrs. Beaumont, with affected eagerness.

"Let me have the paper, then," cried Mr. Palmer. "Where are my spectacles?"

"Are there any letters for *me*?" said sir John Hunter. "Did my newspapers come? Albina, I desired that they should be forwarded here. Mrs. Beaumont, can you tell me any thing of *my* papers?"

"Dear Amelia, how interesting your brother looks when he is pleased!" Albina whispered, quite loud enough to be heard.

"A most gallant action, by St. George!" exclaimed Mr. Palmer. "These are the things that keep up the honour of the British navy and the glory of Britain."

"This Spanish ship that captain Walsingham captured the day after the engagement is likely to turn out a valuable prize, too," said Mrs. Beaumont. "I am vastly glad to find this by his letter, for the money will be useful to him, he wanted it so much. He does not say how much his share will come to, does he, Edward?"

"No, ma'am: you see he writes in a great hurry, and he has only time, as he says, to mention *the needful*."

"And is not the money *the needful*?" said sir John Hunter, with a splenetic smile.

"With Walsingham it is only a secondary consideration," replied Beaumont; "honour is captain Walsingham's first object. I dare say he has never calculated what his prize-money will be."

"Right, right!" reiterated Mr. Palmer; "then he is the right sort. Long may it be before our naval officers think more of prize-money than of glory! Long may it be before our honest tars turn into calculating pirates!"

"They never will nor can whilst they have such officers as captain Walsingham," said Beaumont.

"By St. George, he seems to be a fine fellow, and you a warm friend," said Mr. Palmer. "Ay, ay, the colonel's own son. But why have I never seen any of these Walsinghams since I came to the country? Are they ashamed of being related to me, because I am a merchant."

"More likely they are too proud to pay court to you because you are so rich," said Mr. Beaumont. "But they did come to see you, sir,—the morning you were out so late, mother, you know."

"O ay, true—how unfortunate!"

"But have not we horses? have not we carriages? have not we legs?" said Mr. Palmer. "I'll go and see these Walsinghams to-morrow, please God I live so long; for I am proud of my relationship to this young hero; and I won't be cast off by good people, let them be as proud as they will—that's their fault—but I will not stand on idle ceremony: so, my good mistress Beaumont, we will all go in a body, and storm their castle to-morrow morning."

"An admirable plan! I like it of all things!" said Mrs. Beaumont. "How few, even in youth, are so active and enthusiastic as our good friend. But, my dear Mr. Palmer——"

"But I wish I could see the captain himself. Is there any chance of his coming home?"

"Home! yes," said Beaumont: "did you not read his letter, sir? here it is; he will be at home directly."

He says, 'perhaps a few hours after this letter reaches you, you'll see me.' "

" See him ! Odds my life, I'm glad of it. And you, my little Amelia," said Mr. Palmer, tapping her shoulder as she stood with her back to him reading the newspaper ; " and you, my little silent one, not one word have I heard from you all this time. Does not some spark of your father's spirit kindle within you on hearing of this heroic relation of ours ? "

" Luckily for the ladies, sir," said sir John Hunter, coming up, as he thought, to the lady's assistance— " luckily for young ladies, sir, they are not called upon to be heroes ; and it would be luckier still for us men, if they never set themselves up for heroines—Ha ! ha ! ha ! miss Beaumont," continued he, " the shower is over ; I'll order the horses out, that we may have our ride." Sir John left the room, evidently pleased with his own wit.

" Amelia, my love," said Mrs. Beaumont, who drew up also to give assistance at this critical juncture, " go, this moment, and write a note to your friend miss Walsingham, to say that we shall all be with them early to-morrow : I will send a servant directly, that we may be sure to meet with them at home this time ; you'll find pen, ink, and paper in my dressing-room, love."

Mrs. Beaumont drew Amelia's arm within hers, and, dictating the kindest messages for the Walsinghams, led her out of the room. Having thus successfully covered her daughter's retreat, our skilful manœuvrer returned, all self-complacent, to the company. And next, to please the warm-hearted Mr. Palmer, she seemed to sympathise in his patriotic enthusiasm for the British navy : she pronounced a

panegyric on the *young hero*, captain Walsingham, which made the good old man rub his hands with exultation, and which irradiated with joy the countenance of her son. But, alas! Mrs. Beaumont's endeavours to please, or rather to dupe all parties, could not, even with her consummate address, always succeed: though she had an excellent memory, and great presence of mind, with peculiar quickness both of eye and ear, yet she could not always register, arrange, and recollect all that was necessary for the various parts she undertook to act. Scarcely had she finished her eulogium on captain Walsingham, when, to her dismay, she saw close behind her sir John Hunter, who had entered the room without her perceiving it. He said not one word; but his clouded brow showed his suspicions, and his extreme displeasure.

"Mrs. Beaumont," said he, after some minutes' silence, "I find I must have the honour of wishing you a good morning, for I have an indispensable engagement at home to dinner to-day."

"I thought, sir John, you and Amelia were going to ride."

"Ma'am, miss Beaumont does not choose to ride—she told me so this instant as I passed her on the stairs. Oh! don't disturb her, I beg—she is writing to miss Walsingham—I have the honour to wish you a good morning, ma'am."

"Well, if you are determined to go, let me say three words to you in the music-room, sir John: though," added she, in a whisper intended to be heard by Mr. Palmer, "I know you do not look upon me as your friend, yet depend upon it I shall treat you and all the world with perfect candour."

Sir John, though sulky, could not avoid following the lady ; and as soon as she had shut all the doors and double-doors of the music-room, she exclaimed, " It is always best to speak openly to one's friends. Now, my dear sir John Hunter, how can you be so childish as to take ill of me what I really was forced to say, for *your* interest, about captain Walsingham, to Mr. Palmer ? You know old Palmer is the oddest, most self-willed man imaginable ! humour and please him I must, the few days he is with me. You know he goes on Tuesday—that's decided—Dr. Wheeler has seen him, has talked to him about his health, and it is absolutely necessary that he should return to the West Indies. Then he is perfectly determined to leave all he has to Amelia."

" Yes, ma'am ; but how am I sure of being the better for that ?" interrupted sir John, whose decided selfishness was a match for Mrs. Beaumont's address, because it went without scruple or ceremony straight to his object ; " for, ma'am, you can't think I'm such a fool as not to see that Mr. Palmer wishes me at the devil. Miss Beaumont gives me no encouragement ; and you, ma'am, I know, are too good a politician to offend Mr. Palmer : so, if he declares in favour of this young *hero*, captain Walsingham, I may quit the field."

" But you don't consider that Mr. Palmer's young *hero* has never made any proposal for Amelia."

" Pshaw ! ma'am—but I know, as well as you do, that he likes her, and propose he will for her now that he has money."

" Granting that ; you forget that all this takes time, and that Palmer will be gone to the West Indies before they can bring out their proposal ; and

as soon as he is gone, and has left his will, as he means to do, with me, you and I have the game in our own hands. It is very extraordinary to me that you do not seem to understand my play, though I explained the whole to Albina; and I thought she had made you comprehend the necessity for my *seeming*, for this one week, to be less your friend than I could wish, because of your title, and that odd whim of Palmer, you know: but I am sure we understand one another now."

"Excuse me," said the invincible sir John: "I confess, Mrs. Beaumont, you have so much more abilities, and *finesse*, and all that sort of thing, than I have, that I cannot help being afraid of—of not understanding the business rightly. In business there is nothing like understanding one another, and going on sure grounds. There has been so much going backwards and forwards, and explanations and manœuvres, that I am not clear how it is; nor do I feel secure even that I have the honour of your approbation."

"What! not when I have assured you of it, sir John, in the most unequivocal manner?"

It was singular that the only person to whom in this affair Mrs. Beaumont spoke the real truth should not believe her. Sir John Hunter continued obstinately suspicious and incredulous. He had just heard that his uncle Wigram, his rich uncle Wigram, was taken ill, and not likely to recover. This intelligence had also reached Mrs. Beaumont, and she was anxious to secure the baronet and the Wigram fortune for her daughter; but nothing she could say seemed to satisfy him that she was not double-dealing. At last, to prove to him her sincerity, she gave him what he required, and what alone, he said, could make his

mind easy, could bring him to make up his mind—a *written assurance* of her approbation of his addresses to Amelia. With this he was content ; for, said he, “What is written remains, and there can be no misunderstandings in future, or changing of minds.”

It was agreed between these confidential friends, that sir John should depart, *as it were*, displeased ; and she begged that he would not return till Mr. Palmer should have left the country.

Now there was a numerous tribe of *hangers-on*, who were in the habit of frequenting Beaumont Park, whom Mrs. Beaumont loved to see at her house ; because, beside making her feel her own importance, they were frequently useful to carry on the subordinate parts of her perpetual manœuvres. Among these secondary personages who attended Mrs. Beaumont abroad to increase her consequence in the eyes of common spectators, and who at home filled the stage, and added to the bustle and effect, her chief favourites were Mr. Twigg (the same gentleman who was deputed to decide upon the belt or the screen) and captain Lightbody. Mr. Twigg was the most elegant flatterer of the two, but captain Lightbody was the most assured, and upon the whole made his way the best. He was a handsome man, had a good address, could tell a good story, sing a good song, and *make things go off* well, when there was company ; so that he was a prodigious assistance to the mistress of the house. Then he danced with the young ladies when they had no other partners ; he mounted guard regularly beside the piano-forte, or the harp, when the ladies were playing ; and at dinner, it was always the etiquette for him to sit beside miss Beaumont, or miss Hunter, when the gentlemen guests were not such as Mrs. Beaumont

thought entitled to that honour, or such as she deemed *safe* companions. These arrangements imply that captain Lightbody thought himself in Mrs. Beaumont's confidence: and so he was to a certain degree, just enough to flatter him into doing her high or low behests. Whenever she had a report to circulate, or to contradict, captain Lightbody was put in play; and no man could be better calculated for this purpose, both from his love of talking, and of locomotion. He galloped about from place to place, and from great house to another; knew all the lords and ladies, and generals and colonels, and brigade-majors and aides-de-camp, in the land. Could any mortal be better qualified to fetch and carry news for Mrs. Beaumont? Besides news, it was his office to carry compliments, and to speed the intercourse, not perhaps from soul to soul, but from house to house, which is necessary in a visiting country to keep up the character of an agreeable neighbour. Did Mrs. Beaumont forget to send a card of invitation, or neglect to return a visit, Lightbody was to set it to rights for her, Lightbody, the ready bearer of pretty notes; the maker always, the fabricator sometimes, of the civilest speeches imaginable. This expert speechifier, this ever idle, ever busy scamperer, our heroine despatched to engage a neighbouring family to pay her a morning visit the next day, just about the time which was fixed for her going to see the Walsinghams. The usual caution was given—"Pray, Lightbody, do not let my name be used; do not let me be mentioned; but take it upon yourself, and say, as if from yourself, that you have reason to believe I take it ill that they have not been here lately. And then you can mention the hour that would be

most convenient. But let me have nothing to do with it. I must not appear in it on any account."

In consequence of captain Lightbody's faithful execution of his secret instructions, a barouche full of morning visitors drove to the door, just at the time when Mrs. Beaumont had proposed to set out for Walsingham House. Mrs. Beaumont, with a well-dissembled look of vexation, exclaimed, as she looked out of the window at the carriage, "How provoking! Who can these people be? I hope Martin will say I am not at home. Ring—ring, Amelia. Oh, it's too late, they have seen me! and Martin, stupid creature! has let them in."

Mr. Palmer was much discomfited, and grew more and more impatient, when these troublesome visitors protracted their stay, and proposed a walk, to see some improvements in the grounds.

"But, my good mistress Beaumont," said he, "you know we are engaged to our cousin Walsingham this morning; and if you will give me leave, I will go on before you with Mr. Beaumont, and we can say what detains you."

Disconcerted by this simple determination of this straight-forward, plain-spoken, old gentleman, Mrs. Beaumont saw that further delay on her part would be not only inefficacious, but dangerous. She now was eager to be relieved from the difficulties which she had herself contrived. She would not, for any consideration, have trusted Mr. Palmer to pay this visit without her; therefore, by an able counter-movement, she extricated herself not only without loss, but with advantage, from this perilous situation. She made a handsome apology to her visitors for being obliged to run away from them. "She would

leave Amelia to have the pleasure of showing them the grounds."

Mrs. Beaumont was irresistible in her arrangements. Amelia, disappointed and afraid to show how deeply she felt the disappointment, was obliged to stay to do the honours of Beaumont Park, whilst her mother drove off rejoicing in half the success, at least, of her stratagem; but even as a politician she used upon every occasion too much artifice. It was said of cardinal Mazarin, he is a great politician, but in all his politics there is one capital defect—" *C'est qu'il veut toujours tromper.*"

"How tiresome those people were! I thought we never should have got away from them," said Mrs. Beaumont. "What possessed them to come this morning, and to pay such a horrid long visit? Besides, those Duttons, at all times, are the most stupid creatures upon the face of the earth; I cannot endure them; so awkward and ill-bred too! and yet of a good family—who could think it? They are people one must see, but they are absolutely insufferable."

"Insufferable!" said Mr. Palmer; "why, my good madam, then you have the patience of a martyr; for you suffered them so patiently, that I never should have guessed you suffered at all. I protest I thought they were friends and favourites of yours, and that you were very glad to see them."

"Well, well, 'tis the way of the world," continued Mr. Palmer, "this sort of—what do you call it? double-dealing about visitors, goes on every where, madam Beaumont. But how do I know, that when I go away, you may not be as glad to get rid of me

as you were to get away from these Duttons?" added he, in a tone of forced jocularly: "How do I know, but that the minute my back is turned, you may not begin to take me to pieces in my turn, and say, 'That old Palmer! he was the most tiresome, humorsome, strange, old-fashioned fellow; I thought we should never have got rid of him?'"

"My dear, dear sir, how can you speak in such a manner?" cried Mrs. Beaumont, who had made several vain attempts to interrupt this speech. "You, who are our best friend! is it possible you could suspect? Is there no difference to be made between friends and common acquaintance?"

"I am sure, I hope there is," said Mr. Palmer, smiling.

There was something so near the truth in Mr. Palmer's raillery, that Mrs. Beaumont could not take it with as much easy unconcern as the occasion required, especially in the presence of her son, who maintained a provoking silence. Unhappy indeed are those, who cannot, in such moments of distress, in their own families, and in their nearest connexions, find any relief from their embarrassments, and who look round in vain for one to be *responsible* for their sincerity. Mrs. Beaumont sat uneasy, and almost disconcerted. Mr. Palmer felt for his snuff-box, his usual consolation; but it was not in his pocket: he had left it on his table. Now Mrs. Beaumont was relieved, for she had something to do, and something to say with her wonted politeness: in spite of all remonstrance from Mr. Palmer, her man Martin was sent back for the snuff-box; and conjectures about his finding it, and his being able to

overtake them before they arrived at Walsingham House, supplied conversation for a mile or two.

"Here's Martin coming back full gallop, I vow," said miss Hunter, who could also talk on this topic.

"Come, come, my good lady," said Mr. Palmer, (taking the moment when the young lady had turned her back as she stretched out of the carriage for the pleasure of seeing Martin gallop)—"Come, come, my good Mrs. Beaumont, shake hands and be friends, and hang the Duttons! I did not mean to vex you by what I said. I am not so polite as I should be, I know, and you perhaps are a little too polite. But that is no great harm, especially in a woman."

Martin and the snuff-box came up at this instant ; and all was apparently as well as ever. Yet Mrs. Beaumont, who valued a reputation for sincerity as much as Chartres valued a reputation for honesty, and nearly upon the same principle, was seriously vexed that even this transient light had been let in upon her real character. To such *accidents* duplicity is continually subject.

CHAPTER IX.

“Led by Simplicity divine,
She pleas'd, and never tried to shine ;
She gave to chance each unschool'd feature,
And left her cause to sense and nature.”

MORE.

ARRIVED at Walsingham Park, they met miss Walsingham walking at some distance from the house.

“Is captain Walsingham come?” was the first question asked. “No, but expected every hour.”

That he had not actually arrived was a comfortable reprieve to Mrs. Beaumont. Breathing more freely, and in refreshed spirits, she prepared to alight from her carriage to walk to the house with miss Walsingham, as Mr. Palmer proposed. Miss Hunter, who was dressed with uncommon elegance, remonstrated in favour of her delicate slippers : not that she named the real object of her solicitude, no ; she had not spent so much time with Mrs. Beaumont, that great mistress of the art of apologising, without learning at least the inferior practices of the trade. Of course she had all the little common arts of excuse ever ready : and instead of saying that she did not like to walk because she was afraid to spoil her shoes, she protested she was afraid of the heat, and could not walk so far. But Mr. Beaumont had jumped out of the carriage, and Mrs. Beaumont did not wish that he should walk home *tête-à-tête* with miss Walsingham ; therefore miss Hunter's remonstrances were of no avail.

“ My love, you will not be heated, for our walk is through this charming shady grove ; and if you are tired, here’s my son will give you his arm.”

Satisfied with this arrangement, the young lady, thus supported, found it possible to walk. Mr. Palmer walked his own pace, looking round at the beauties of the place, and desiring that nobody might mind him. This was his way, and Mrs. Beaumont never teased him with talking to him, when he did not seem to be in the humour for it. She, who made something of every thing, began to manage the conversation with her other companions during the walk, so as to favour her views upon the several parties. Pursuing her principle, that love is in men’s minds generally independent of esteem, and believing that her son might be rendered afraid of the superiority of miss Walsingham’s understanding, Mrs. Beaumont took treacherous pains to *draw her out*. Starting from chance seemingly, as she well knew how, a subject of debate, she went from talking of the late marriage of some neighbouring couple, to discuss a question on which she believed that miss Walsingham’s opinion would differ from that of her son. The point was, whether a wife should or should not have pin-money. Miss Walsingham thought that a wife’s accepting it would tend to establish a separate interest between married people. Mr. Beaumont, on the contrary, was of opinion, that a wife’s having a separate allowance would prevent disputes. So miss Hunter thought of course, for she had been prepared to be precisely of Mr. Beaumont’s opinion : but reasons she had none in its support. Indeed, she said with a pretty simper, she thought that women had nothing to do with reason or reasoning ;

that she thought a woman who really loved *any body* was always of that person's opinion; and especially in a wife she did not see of what use reasoning and *all that* could be, except to make a woman contradict, and be odd, and fond of ruling: that for her part, she had no pretensions to any understanding, and if she had ever so much, she should be glad, she declared upon her honour, to get rid of it if she could; for what use could it possibly be of to her, when it must be the husband's understanding that must always judge and rule, and a wife ought only to obey, and be always of the opinion of the man of her choice.—Having thus made her profession of folly in broken sentences, with pretty confusion and all-becoming graces, she leaned upon Mr. Beaumont's arm with a bewitching air of languid delicacy, that solicited support. Mrs. Beaumont suppressing a sigh, which however she took care that her son should hear, turned to miss Walsingham, and, in a whisper, owned that she could not help loving abilities and spirit, too, even in her own sex. Then she observed aloud, that much might be urged on her side of the question with regard to pin-money; for not only, as miss Walsingham justly said, it might tend to make a separate interest between husband and wife, but the wife would probably be kept in total ignorance of her husband's affairs; and *that* in some cases might be very disadvantageous, as some women are more capable, from their superior understanding, of managing every thing than most men, indeed, than any man she could name.

Even under favour of this pretty compliment, which was plainly directed by a glance of Mrs. Beaumont's eye, miss Walsingham would not accept of

this painful pre-eminence. She explained and made it clear, that she had not any ambition to rule or manage.

“That I can readily believe,” said Mr. Beaumont; “for I have observed, that it is not always the women who are the most able to decide who are the most ambitious to govern.”

This observation either was not heard or was not understood by miss Hunter, whose whole soul was occupied in settling some fold of her drapery: but Mr. Beaumont's speech had its full effect on Mrs. Beaumont, who bit her lip, and looked reproachfully at her son, as if she thought this an infringement of his promised truce. A moment afterwards she felt the imprudence of her own reproachful look, and was sensible that she would have done better not to have fixed the opinion or feeling in her son's mind by noticing it thus with displeasure. Recovering herself, for she never was disconcerted for more than half a minute, she passed on with easy grace to discuss the merits of the heroine of some new novel—an historic novel, which gave her opportunity of appealing to miss Walsingham on some disputed points of history. She dexterously attempted to draw her *well-informed* young friend into a display of literature, which might alarm Mr. Beaumont. His education had in some respects been shamefully neglected; for his mother had calculated that ignorance would ensure dependence. He had endeavoured to supply, at a late period of his education, the defects of its commencement; but he was sensible that he had not supplied all his deficiencies, and he was apt to feel, with painful impatient sensibility, his inferiority, whenever literary subjects were introduced. Miss Walsingham, however, was so perfectly free from all the

affectation and vanity of a bel-esprit, that she did not alarm even those who were inferior to her in knowledge; their self-complacency, instead of being depressed by the comparison of their attainments with hers, was insensibly raised, by the perception that notwithstanding these, she could take pleasure in their conversation, could appreciate their good sense or originality of thought, without recurring to the authority of books, or of great names. In fact, her mind had never been overwhelmed by a wasteful torrent of learning. That the stream of literature had passed over it was apparent only from its fertility. Mrs. Beaumont repented of having drawn her into conversation. Indeed, our heroine had trusted too much to some expressions, which had at times dropped from her son, about *learned ladies*, and certain *conversazioni*. She had concluded that he would never endure literature in a wife; but she now perceived her mistake. She discerned it too late; and at this moment she was doubly vexed, for she saw miss Hunter *produce* herself in most disadvantageous contrast to her rival. In conformity to instructions, which Mrs. Beaumont had secretly given her, not to show too much sense or learning, because gentlemen in general, and in particular Mr. Beaumont, disliked it; this young lady now professed absolute ignorance and incapacity upon all subjects; and meaning to have an air of pretty, childish innocence or timidity, really made herself appear quite like a simpleton. At the same time a tinge of ineffectual malice and envy appeared through her ill-feigned humility. She could give no opinion of any book—Oh, she would not give any judgment for the whole world! She did not think herself qualified to speak, even if she had read

the book, which indeed she had not, for, really, she never read—she was not a *reading lady*.

As miss Hunter had no portion of Mrs. Beaumont's quick penetration, she did not see the unfavourable impression these words made: certain that she was following exactly her secret instructions, she was confident of being in the right line; so on she went, whilst Mrs. Beaumont sighed in vain; and miss Walsingham, who now saw and understood her whole play, almost smiled at the comic of the scene.

“O dear, Mrs. Beaumont,” continued miss Hunter, “how can you ever appeal to me about books and those sort of things, when you know I know nothing about the matter? For mercy's sake, never do so any more, for you know I've no taste for those sort of things. And besides, I own, even if I could, I should so hate to be thought a blue-stocking—I would not have the least bit of blue in my stockings for the whole world—I'd rather have any other colour, black, white, red, green, yellow, any other colour. So I own I'm not sorry I'm not what they call a genius; for though genius to be sure's a very fascinating sort of thing in gentlemen, yet in women it is not so becoming, I think, especially in ladies: it does very well on the stage, and for artists, and so on; but really, now, in company, I think it's an awkward thing, and would make one look so odd! Now, Mr. Beaumont, I must tell you an anecdote——”

“Stop, my dear miss Hunter, your ear-ring is coming out. Stay! let me clasp it, love!” exclaimed Mrs. Beaumont, determined to stop her in the career of nonsense, by giving her sensations, since she could not give her ideas, a new turn.

“Oh, ma'am! ma'am! Oh! my ear! you are

killing me, dearest Mrs. Beaumont! pinching me to death, ma'am!"

"Did I pinch, my dear? It was the hinge of the ear-ring, I suppose."

"I don't know what it was; but here's blood, I declare!"

"My love, I beg you a thousand pardons. How could I be so awkward! But why could not you for one moment hold your little head still?"

Miss Walsingham applied a patch to the wound.

"Such a pretty ear as it is," continued Mrs. Beaumont, "I am sure it was a pity to hurt it."

"You really did hurt it," said Mr. Beaumont, in a tone of compassion.

"O, horridly!" cried Miss Hunter—"and I, that always faint at the sight of blood!"

Afraid that the young lady would again spoil her part in the acting, and lose all the advantage which might result from the combined effect of the pretty ear, and of compassion, Mrs. Beaumont endeavoured to take off her attention from the wound, by attacking her ear-rings.

"My love," said she, "don't wear these ear-rings any more, for I assure you there is no possibility of shutting or opening them, without hurting you."

This expedient, however, nearly proved fatal in its consequences. Miss Hunter entered most warmly into the defence of her ear-rings; and appealed to Mr. Beaumont to confirm her decision, that they were the prettiest and best ear-rings in the world. Unluckily, they did not particularly suit his fancy; and the young lady, who had, but half an hour before, professed that she could never be of a different opinion in any thing from that of the man she loved,

now pettishly declared that she could not and would not give up her taste. Incensed still more by a bow of submission, but not of conviction, from Mr. Beaumont, she went on, regardless of her dearest Mrs. Beaumont's frowns, and vehemently maintained her judgment, quoting, with triumphant volubility, innumerable precedents of ladies, "who had just bought *the very same* ear-rings, and whose taste she believed nobody would dispute."

Mr. Beaumont had seen enough, now and upon many other occasions, to be convinced that it is not on matters of consequence that ladies are apt to grow most angry; and he stood confirmed in his belief that those who in theory professed to have such a humble opinion of their own abilities that they cannot do or understand any thing useful, are often, in practice, the most prone to insist upon the infallibility of their taste and judgment. Mrs. Beaumont, who saw with one glance of her quick eye what passed at this moment in her son's mind, sighed, and said to herself—"How impossible to manage a fool, who ravel, as fast as one weaves, the web of her fortune!"

Yet though Mrs. Beaumont perceived and acknowledged the impracticability of managing a fool for a single hour, it was one of the favourite objects of her manœuvres to obtain this very fool for a daughter-in-law, with the hope of governing her for life. So inconsistent are cunning people, even of the best abilities; so ill do they calculate the value of their ultimate objects, however ingeniously they devise their means, or adapt them to their ends.

During this walk Mr. Palmer had taken no part in the conversation; he had seemed engrossed with his own thoughts, or occupied with observing the beauties of the place. Tired with her walk—for Mrs.

Beaumont always complained of being fatigued when she was vexed, thus at once concealing her vexation, and throwing the faults of her mind upon her body—she stretched herself upon a sofa as soon as she reached the house, nor did she recover from her exhausted state till she cast her eyes upon a tamborine, which she knew would afford means of showing miss Hunter's figure and graces to advantage. Slight as this resource may seem, Mrs. Beaumont well knew that alighting still have often produced great effects. Soon afterward she observed her son smiled repeatedly as he read a passage in some book that lay upon the table, and she had the curiosity to take up the book when he turned away. She found that it was Cumberland's Memoirs, and saw the following little poem marked with reiterated lines of approbation :

“ Why, Affectation, why this mock grimace ?
Go, silly thing, and hide that simp'ring face.
Thy lisping prattle, and thy mincing gait,
All thy false mimic fooleries I hate ;
For thou art Folly's counterfeit, and she
Who is right foolish hath the better plea ;
Nature's true idiot I prefer to thee.

Why that soft languish ? Why that drawling tone ?
Art sick, art sleepy ? Get thee hence : begone.
I laugh at all thy pretty baby tears,
Those flutt'rings, faintings, and unreal fears.

Can they deceive us ? Can such mumm'ries move,
Touch us with pity, or inspire with love ?
No, Affectation, vain is all thy art !
Those eyes may wander over ev'ry part,
They'll never find their passage to the heart.”

Mrs. Beaumont, the moment she had read these

lines, perceived why her son had smiled. The portrait seemed really to have been drawn from miss Hunter, and the lines were so *à-propos* to the scene which had just passed during the walk, that it was impossible to avoid the application. Mrs. Beaumont shut the book hastily, as her dear Albina approached, for she was afraid that the young lady would have known her own picture. So few people, however, even of those much wiser than miss Hunter, know themselves, that she need not have been alarmed. But she had no longer leisure to devote her thoughts to this subject, for Mr. Walsingham, who had been out riding, had by this time returned; and the moment he entered the room, Mrs. Beaumont's attention was directed to him and to Mr. Palmer. She introduced them to each other, with many expressions of regret that they should not have sooner met.

Characters that are free from artifice immediately coalesce, as metals that are perfectly pure can be readily cemented together. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Walsingham were intimate in half an hour. There was an air of openness and sincerity about Mr. Walsingham; a freedom and directness in his conversation, which delighted Mr. Palmer.

"I am heartily glad we have met at last, my good cousin Walsingham," said he: "very sorry should I have been to have left the country without becoming acquainted with you: and now I wish your gallant captain was arrived. I am to set off the day after to-morrow, and I am sadly afraid I shall miss seeing him."

Mr. Walsingham said, that as they expected him every hour, he hoped Mr. Palmer would persuade

Mrs. Beaumont to spend the day at Walsingham House.

Mrs. Beaumont dared not object. On the contrary, it was now her policy to pretend the fondest friendship for all the Walsingham family: yet, all the time, pursuing her plan of preventing Mr. Palmer from discerning their real characters and superior merit, she managed with great dexterity to keep the conversation as much as possible upon general topics, and tried to prevent Mr. Palmer from being much alone with Mr. Walsingham, for she dreaded their growing intimacy. After dinner, however, when the ladies retired, the gentlemen drew their chairs close together, and had a great deal of conversation on interesting subjects. The most interesting was captain Walsingham: Mr. Palmer earnestly desired to hear the particulars of his history.

"And from whom," said young Beaumont, turning to Mr. Walsingham, "can he hear them better than from captain Walsingham's guardian and friend?"

CHAPTER X.

"Yet never seaman more serenely brave
Led Britain's conqu'ring squadrons o'er the wave."

"FRIENDS are not always the best biographers," said Mr. Walsingham; "but I will try to be impartial. My ward's first desire to be a sailor was

excited, as he has often since told me, by reading Robinson Crusoe. When he was scarcely thirteen he went out in the *Resolute*, a frigate, under the command of captain Campbell. Campbell was an excellent officer, and very strict in all that related to order and discipline. It was his principle and his practice never to forgive *a first offence*; by which the number of second faults was considerably diminished. My ward was not much pleased at first with his captain; but he was afterwards convinced that this strictness was what made a man of him. He was buffeted about, and shown the rough of life; made to work hard, and submit to authority. To reason he was always ready to yield; and by degrees he learned that his first duty as a sailor was implicit obedience. In due time he was made a lieutenant: in this situation, his mixed duties of command and obedience were difficult; because his first-lieutenant, the captain's son, was jealous of him.

“Walsingham found it a more difficult task to win the confidence of the son than it had been to earn the friendship of the father. His punctuality in obeying orders, and his respectful manner to the lieutenant, availed but little; for young Campbell still viewed him with scornful yet with jealous eyes, imagining that he only wanted to show himself the better officer.

“Of the falsehood of these suspicions Walsingham had at last an opportunity of giving unquestionable proof. It happened one day, that lieutenant Campbell, impatient at seeing a sailor doing some work awkwardly on the outside of the vessel, snatched the rope from his hand, and swore he would do it himself. In his hurry, Campbell missed his footing, and fell overboard:—he could not swim. Walsingham had

the presence of mind to order the ship to be put about, and plunged instantly into the water to save his rival. With much exertion he reached Campbell, supported him till the boat was lowered down, and got him safe aboard again."

"Just like himself!" cried young Beaumont; "all he ever wanted was opportunity to show his soul."

"The first-lieutenant's jealousy was now changed into gratitude," continued Mr. Walsingham; "and from this time forward, instead of suffering from that petty rivalry by which he used to be obstructed, Walsingham enjoyed the entire confidence of young Campbell. This good understanding between him and his brother officer not only made their every day lives pleasant, but in times of difficulty secured success. For three years that they lived together after this period, and during which time they were ordered to every quarter of the globe, they never had the slightest dispute, either in the busiest or the idlest times. At length, in some engagement with a Dutch ship, the particulars of which I forget, lieutenant Campbell was mortally wounded: his last words were—'Walsingham, comfort my father.' That was no easy task. Stern as captain Campbell seemed, the loss of his son was irreparable. He never shed a tear when he was told it was all over, but said, 'God's will be done;' and turning into his cabin, desired to be left alone. Half an hour afterwards he sent for Walsingham, who found him quite calm: 'We must see and do our duty together to the last,' said he.

"He exerted himself strenuously, and to all outward appearance was, as the sailors said, the same man as ever; but Walsingham, who knew him better, saw that his heart was broken, and that he wished

for nothing but an honourable death. One morning as he was on deck looking through his glass, he called to Walsingham, 'Your eyes are better than mine,' said he; 'look here and tell me, do you see yonder sail—she's French? La Magnanime frigate, if I'm not mistaken.' 'Yes,' said Walsingham, 'I know her by the patch in her mainsail.'—'We'll give her something to do,' said Campbell, though she's so much our superior. Please God, before this sun's over our heads, you shall have her in tow, Walsingham.'—'We shall, I trust,' said Walsingham.—'Perhaps not *we*, for I own I wish to fall,' said Campbell. 'You are first-lieutenant now; I can't leave my men under better command, and I hope the Admiralty will give you the ship, if you give it to his Majesty.'—Then turning to the sailors, captain Campbell addressed them with a countenance unusually cheerful; and, after a few words of encouragement, gave orders to clear decks for action. 'Walsingham, you'll see to every thing whilst I step down to write.' He wrote, as it was afterwards found, two letters, both concerning Walsingham's interests. The frigate with which they had to engage was indeed far superior to them in force; but Campbell trusted to the good order and steadiness as well as to the courage of his men. The action was long and obstinate. Twice the English attempted to board the enemy, and twice were repulsed. The third time, just as captain Campbell had seized hold of the French colours, which hung in rags over the side of the enemy's ship, he received a wound in his breast, fell back into Walsingham's arms, and almost instantly expired. The event of this day was different from what Campbell had expected, for *Le Succès*, of fifty guns, appeared in sight; and, after a

desperate engagement with her, in which Walsingham was severely wounded, and every other officer on board killed or wounded, Walsingham saw that nothing was left but to make a wanton sacrifice of the remainder of his crew, or to strike.

"After a contest of six hours, he struck to *Le Succès*. Perfect silence on his deck; a loud and insulting shout from the enemy!

"No sooner had Walsingham struck, than *La Force*, the captain of *Le Succès*, hailed him, and ordered him to come in his own boat, and to deliver his sword. Walsingham replied, that 'his sword, so demanded, should never be delivered but with his life*.' The Frenchman did not think proper to persist; but soon after sent his lieutenant on board the *Resolute*, where the men were found at their quarters with lighted matches in their hands, ready to be as good as their word. *La Force*, the captain of *Le Succès*, was a sailor of fortune, who had risen by chance, not merit."

"Ay, ay," interrupted Mr. Palmer, "so I thought; and there was no great merit, or glory either, in a French fifty gun taking an English frigate, after standing a six hours' contest with another ship. Well, my dear sir, what became of poor Walsingham? How did this rascally Frenchman treat his prisoners?"

"Scandalously!" cried Beaumont; "and yet Walsingham is so generous that he will never let me damn the nation, for what he says was only the fault of an individual, who disgraced it."

"Well, let me hear and judge for myself," said Mr. Palmer.

* Life of Admiral Roddam, Monthly Magazine.

"La Force carried the Resolute in triumph into a French port," continued Mr. Walsingham. "Vain of displaying his prisoners, he marched them up the country, under pretence that they would not be safe in a sea-port. Cambray was the town in which they were confined. Walsingham found the officers of the garrison very civil to him at first; but when they saw that he was not fond of high play, and that he declined being of their parties at billiards and *vingt-un*, they grew tired of him; for without these resources, they declared they should perish with *ennui* in a country town. Even under the penalty of losing all society, Walsingham resisted every temptation to game, and submitted to live with the strictest economy rather than to run in debt."

"But did you never send him any money? Or did not he get your remittances?" said Mr. Palmer.

"My dear sir, by some delays of letters, we did not hear for two months where he was imprisoned."

"And he was reduced to the greatest distress," pursued Beaumont; "for he had shared all he had, to the utmost farthing, with his poor fellow-prisoners."

"Like a true British sailor!" said Mr. Palmer. "Well, sir, I hope he contrived to make his escape?"

"No, for he would not break his parole," said Beaumont.

"His parole! I did not know he was on his parole," said Mr. Palmer. "Then certainly he could not break it."

"He had two tempting opportunities, I can assure you," said Beaumont; "one offered by the commandant's lady, who was not insensible to his merit; the other, by the gratitude of some poor servant,

whom he had obliged—Mr. Walsingham can tell you all the particulars.”

“ No, I need not detail the circumstances ; it is enough to tell you, sir, that he withstood the temptations, would not break his parole, and remained four months a prisoner in Cambray. Like the officers of the garrison, he should have drunk or gamed, or else he must have died of vexation, he says, if he had not fortunately had a taste for reading, and luckily procured books from a good old priest’s library. At the end of four months, the garrison of Cambray was changed ; and instead of a set of dissipated officers, there came a well-conducted regiment, under the command of M. de Villars, an elderly officer of sense and discretion.”

“ An excellent man !” cried Beaumont : “ I love him with all my soul, though I never saw him. But I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Mr. Walsingham.”

“ A prattling hairdresser at Cambray first prepossessed M. de Villars in Walsingham’s favour, by relating a number of anecdotes intended to throw abuse and ridicule upon the English captain, to convict him of misanthropy and economy ; of having had his hair dressed but twice since he came to Cambray ; of never having frequented the society of madame la Marquise de Marsillac, the late commandant’s lady, for more than a fortnight after his arrival ; of having actually been detected in working with his own hands with smiths’ and carpenters’ tools. Upon the strength of the hairdresser’s information, M. de Villars paid the English captain a visit ; was pleased by his conversation, and by all that he observed of his conduct and character.

“As M. de Villars was going down stairs after having spent an evening with Walsingham, a boy of twelve years old, the son of the master of the lodging-house, equipped in a military uniform, stood across the landing-place, as if determined to stop him. ‘*Mon petit militaire,*’ said the commandant, ‘do you mean to dispute my passage?’ ‘No, *mon general,*’ said the boy, ‘I know my duty too well. But I post myself here to demand an audience, for I have a secret of importance to communicate.’ M. de Villars, smiling at the boy’s air of consequence, yet pleased with the steady earnestness of his manner, took him by the hand into an antechamber, and said that he was ready to listen to whatever he had to impart. The boy then told him that he had accidentally overheard a proposal, which had been made to facilitate the English captain’s escape, and that the captain refused to comply with it, because it was not honourable to break his parole. The boy, who had been struck by the circumstance, and who, besides, was grateful to Walsingham for some little instances of kindness, spoke with much enthusiasm in his favour; and, as M. de Villars afterwards repeated, finished his speech by exclaiming, ‘I would give every thing I have in the world, except my sword and my honour, to procure this English captain his liberty.’

“M. de Villars was pleased with the boy’s manner, and with the fact which he related; so much so, that he promised, that if Walsingham’s liberty could be obtained, he would procure it. ‘And you, my good little friend, shall, if I succeed,’ added he, ‘have the pleasure of being the first to tell him the good news.’

“Some days afterwards, the boy burst into Wal-

singham's room, exclaiming, 'Liberty! liberty! you are at liberty!'—He danced and capered with such wild joy, that it was some time before Walsingham could obtain any explanation, or could prevail on him to let him look at a letter which he held in his hand, flourishing it about in triumph. At last, he showed that it was an order from M. de Villars, for the release of captain Walsingham, and of all the English prisoners, belonging to the *Resolute*, for whom exchanges had been effected. No favour could be granted in a manner more honourable to all the parties concerned. Walsingham arrived in England without any further difficulties."

"Thank God!" said Mr. Palmer. "Well, now he has touched English ground again, I have some hopes for him. What next?"

"The first thing he did, of course, was to announce his return to the Admiralty. A court-martial was held at Portsmouth; and, fortunately for him, was composed of officers of the highest distinction, so that the first men in his profession became thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances of his conduct. The enthusiasm with which his men bore testimony in his favour was gratifying to his feelings, and the minutes of the evidence were most honourable to him. The court pronounced, that lieutenant Walsingham had done all that could be effected by the most gallant and judicious officer in the defence of His Majesty's ship *Resolute*. The ministry who had employed captain Campbell were no longer in place, and one of the Lords of the Admiralty at this time happened to have had some personal quarrel with him. A few days after the trial, Walsingham was at a public dinner, at which Campbell's character became the subject of conversation. Walsingham was warned,

in a whisper, that the first Lord of the Admiralty's private secretary was present, and was advised to be *prudent*: but Walsingham's prudence was not of that sort which can coolly hear a worthy man's memory damned with faint praise; his prudence was not of that sort which can tamely sit by and see a friend's reputation in danger. With all the warmth and eloquence of friendship, he spoke in captain Campbell's defence, and paid a just and energetic tribute of praise to his memory. He spoke, and not a word more was said against Campbell. The politicians looked down upon their plates; and there was a pause of that sort, which sometimes in a company of interested men of the world results from surprise at the imprudent honesty of a good-natured novice. Walsingham, as the company soon afterwards broke up, heard one gentleman say of him to another, as they went away—"There's a fellow now, who has ruined himself without knowing it, and all for a dead man." It was not without knowing it. Walsingham was well aware what he hazarded; but he was then, and ever, ready to sacrifice his own interests in the defence of truth and of a friend. For two long years afterwards, Walsingham was, in the technical and elegant phrase, *left on the shelf, and the door of promotion was shut against him.*"

"Yes; and there he might have remained till now," said Beaumont, "if it had not been for that good Mr. Gaspar, a clerk in one of their offices: a man, who, though used to live among courtiers and people hackneyed in the political ways of the world, was a plain, warm-hearted friend, a man of an upright character, who prized integrity and generosity the more because he met with them so seldom. But I beg your pardon, Mr. Walsingham, will you go on

and tell Mr. Palmer how and why Gaspar served our friend?"

"One day, Walsingham had occasion to go to Mr. Gaspar's office to search for some papers relative to certain charts, which he had drawn, and intended to present to the Admiralty. In talking of the soundings of some bay he had taken whilst out with captain Campbell, he mentioned him, as he always did, with terms of affection and respect. Mr. Gaspar immediately asked, 'Are you, sir, that lieutenant Walsingham, of the *Resolute*, who at a public dinner about two years ago made such a disinterested defence of your captain? If it is in my power to serve you, depend upon it I will. Leave your charts with me; I think I may have an opportunity of turning them to your advantage, and that of the service.' Gaspar, who was thoroughly in earnest, took a happy moment to produce Walsingham's charts before the Admiralty, just at a time when they were wanted. The Admiralty were glad to employ an officer who had some local information, and they sent him out in the *Dreadnought*, a thirty-six gun frigate, with captain Jemmison, to the West Indies."

"And what sort of a man was his new captain?" said Mr. Palmer.

"As unlike his old one as possible," said Beaumont.

"Yes," continued Mr. Walsingham, "in every point, except courage, captain Jemmison was as complete a contrast as could be imagined to captain Campbell. Whatever else he might be, Jemmison was certainly a man of undaunted courage."

"That's of course, if he was a captain in the British navy," said Mr. Palmer.

"From his appearance, however, you would never

have taken him for a gallant sailor," said Mr. Walsingham: "abhorring the rough, brutal, swearing, grog-drinking, tobacco-chewing race of sea-officers, the Bens and the Mirvans of former times, captain Jemmison, resolving, I suppose, to avoid their faults, went into the contrary extreme of refinement and effeminacy. A superlative coxcomb, and an epicure more from fashion than taste, he gloried in descanting, with technical precision, on the merits of dishes and of cooks. His table, even on shipboard, was to be equalled in elegance only by his toilet."

"The puppy!" exclaimed Mr. Palmer. "And how could captain Walsingham go on with such a coxcomb?"

"Very ill, you may be sure," said Beaumont; "for Walsingham, I'll answer for it, never could conceal or control his feelings of contempt or indignation."

"Yet, as captain Jemmison's lieutenant, he always behaved with perfect propriety," said Mr. Walsingham, "and bore with his foppery and impertinence with the patience becoming a subordinate officer to his superior. Jemmison could not endure a lieutenant whose character and manners were a continual contrast and reproach to his own, and he disliked him the more because he could never provoke him to any disrespect. Jemmison often replied even to Walsingham's silent contempt; as a French pamphleteer once published a book, entitled *Réponse au Silence de M. de la Motte*. On some points, where duty and principle were concerned, Walsingham, however, could not be silent. There was a lad of the name of Birch on board the Dreadnought, whom Walsingham had taken under his immediate care, and whom he was endeavouring to train up in every good habit.

Jemmison, to torment Walsingham, made it his pleasure to counteract him in these endeavours, and continually did all he could to spoil Birch by foolish indulgence. Walsingham's indignation was upon these occasions vehement, and his captain and he came to frequent quarrels. Young Birch, who had sense enough to know which was his true friend, one day threw himself on his knees to beseech his lieutenant not to hazard too much on his account, and solemnly swore that he would never be guilty of the slightest excess or negligence during the remainder of the voyage. The young man was steady to his promise, and by his resolution and temper prevented Walsingham and his captain from coming to a serious rupture. When they arrived at their place of destination, Jamaica, captain Jemmison went on shore to divert himself, and spend his time in great dissipation at Spanish Town, eating, dressing, dancing, gallanting, and glorying in its being observed by all the ladies, that he had nothing of a sea-captain about him. The other officers, encouraged by his precept and example, left the ship; but Walsingham staid on board, and had severe duty to perform, for he could not allow the crew to go on shore, because they got into riots with the townspeople. Soon after their arrival, and even during the course of their voyage, he had observed among the sailors something like a disposition to mutiny, encouraged probably by the negligence and apparent effeminacy of their captain. Though they knew him to be a man of intrepidity, yet they ridiculed and despised his coxcombry, and his relaxation of discipline gave them hopes of succeeding in their mutinous schemes. Walsingham strongly and repeatedly represented to captain Jemmison the danger, and remonstrated with him and the other

officers upon the imprudence of leaving the ship at this juncture. But Jemmison, in a prettily rounded period, protested he saw no penumbra of danger, and that till he was called upon by Mars, he owned he preferred the charms of Venus.

“ This was vastly elegant ; but, nevertheless, it happened one night, when the captain, after having eaten an admirable supper, was paying his court to a Creole lady of Spanish Town, news was brought him, that the crew of the Dreadnought had mutinied, and that lieutenant Walsingham was killed. One half of the report was true, and the other nearly so. At midnight, after having been exhausted during the preceding week by his vigilance, Walsingham had just thrown himself into his cot, when he was roused by Birch at his cabin-door, crying ‘ A mutiny ! a mutiny on deck ! ’—Walsingham seized his drawn cutlass, and ran up the ladder, determined to cut down the ringleader ; but just as he reached the top, the sailors shut down the hatchway, which struck his head with such violence, that he fell, stunned, and, to all appearance, dead. Birch contrived in the midst of the bustle, before he was himself seized by the mutineers, to convey, by signals to shore, news of what had happened. But captain Jemmison could now be of no use. Before he could take any measures to prevent them, the mutineers weighed anchor, and the Dreadnought, under a brisk breeze, was out of the bay ; all the other vessels in the harbour taking it for granted that her captain was on board, and that she was sailing under orders. In the mean time, whilst Walsingham was senseless, the sailors stowed him into his cabin, and set a guard over him. The ringleader, Jefferies, a revengeful villain, who bore malice against him for some just punishment, wanted

to murder him, but the rest would not consent. Some would not dip their hands in blood ; others pleaded for him, and said that he was never cruel. One man urged, that the lieutenant had been kind to him when he was sick. Another suggested, that it would be well to keep him alive to manage the ship for them, in case of difficulties. Conscious of their ignorance, they acceded to this advice ; Jefferies' proposal to murder him was overruled : and it was agreed to keep Walsingham close prisoner, till they should need his assistance. He had his timekeeper and log-book locked up with him, which were totally forgotten by these miscreants. Never seaman prayed more fervently for fair weather than Walsingham now did for a storm. At last, one night he heard (and he says it was one of the pleasantest sounds he ever heard in his life) the wind rising. Soon it blew a storm. He heard one of the sailors say—' A stiff gale, Jack !' and another—' An ugly night !' Presently, great noise on deck, and the pumps at work. Every moment he now expected a deputation from the mutineers. The first person he saw was the carpenter, who came in to knock in the dead lights in the cabin windows. The man was surly, and would give no answer to any questions ; but Walsingham knew by the hurry of his work, that the fellow thought there was no time to be lost. Twice, before he could finish what he was about, messages came from *captain Jefferies*, to order him to something else. Then a violent crash above from the fall of a mast : and then he heard one cry—' I'll be cursed if I should care, if we did but know whereabouts we are.' Then all was in such uproar, that no voices could be distinguished. At last his cabin-door unlocked, and many voices called upon him at once to

come upon deck that instant and save the ship. Walsingham absolutely refused to do any thing for them till they returned to their duty, delivered up to him their arms, and their ringleader, Jefferies. At this answer they stood aghast. Some tried entreaties, some threats: all in vain. Walsingham coolly said, he would go to the bottom along with the ship rather than say a word to save them, till they submitted. The storm blew stronger—the danger every moment increasing. One of the mutineers came with a drawn cutlass, another levelled a blunderbuss at Walsingham, swearing to despatch him that instant, if he would not tell them where they were. ‘Murder me, and you will be hanged. Persist in your mutiny, you’ll be drowned,’ said Walsingham. ‘You’ll never make me swerve from my duty, and you know it—you have my answer.’ The enraged sailors seized him in their arms, and carried him by force upon deck, where the sight of the danger, and the cries of ‘Throw him overboard!—over with him!’ only seemed to fortify his resolution. Not a word, not a sign could they get from him. The rudder was now unshipped! At this the sailors’ fury turned suddenly upon Jefferies, who between terror and ignorance was utterly incapacitated. They seized, bound, gave him up to Walsingham, returned to their duty; and then, and not till then, Walsingham resumed his command. Walsingham’s voice, once more heard, inspired confidence, and with the hopes revived the exertions of the sailors. I am not seaman enough to tell you how the ship was saved; but that it was saved, and saved by Walsingham, is certain. I remember only, that he made the ship manageable by some contrivance, which he substituted in the place of the rudder, that had been unshipped. The storm

abating, he made for the first port, to repair the ship's damages, intending to return to Jamaica, to deliver her up to her captain; but from a vessel they spoke at sea, he learned that Jemmison was gone to England in a merchant-man. To England then Walsingham prepared to follow."

"And with this rebel crew!" cried Beaumont; "think, Mr. Palmer, what a situation he was in, knowing, as he did, that every rascal of them would sooner go to the devil than go home, where they knew they must be tried for their mutiny."

"Well! sir, well!" said Mr. Palmer. "Did they run away with the ship a second time! Or how did he manage?"

"He called them all one morning together on deck; and pointing to the place where the gunpowder was kept, he said—'I have means of blowing up the ship. If ever you attempt to mutiny again, the first finger you lay upon me, I blow her up instantly.' They had found him to be a man of resolution. They kept to their duty. Not a symptom of disobedience during the rest of the voyage. In their passage they fell in with an enemy's ship, far superior to them in force. 'There, my lads!' said Walsingham, 'if you have a mind to earn your pardons, there's your best chance. Take her home with you to your captain and your king.' A loud cheer was their answer. They fought like devils to redeem themselves. Walsingham—but without stopping to make his panegyric, I need only tell you, that Walsingham's conduct and intrepidity were this time crowned with success. He took the enemy's ship, and carried it in triumph into Portsmouth. Jemmison was on the platform when they came in; and what a mortifying sight it was to him, and what

a proud hour to Walsingham, you may imagine ! Having delivered the Dreadnought and her prize over to his captain, the next thing to be thought of was the trial of the mutineers. All except Jefferies obtained a pardon, in consideration of their return to duty, and their subsequent services. Jefferies was hanged at the yard-arm. The trial of the mutineers brought on, as Jemmison foresaw it must, many animadversions on his own conduct. Powerful connexions, and his friends in place, silenced, as much as possible, the public voice. Jemmison gave excellent dinners, and endeavoured to drown the whole affair in his choice Champagne and *London particular Madeira* ; so his health, and success to the British navy, was drunk in bumper toasts."

" Ay, ay, they think to do every thing now in England by dinners, and bumper toasts, and three times three," said Mr. Palmer.

" But it did not do in this instance," said Beaumont, in a tone of exultation : " it did not do."

" No," continued Mr. Walsingham ; " though Jemmison's dinners went down vastly well with a party, they did not satisfy the public. The opposition papers grew clamorous, and the business was taken up so strongly, and it raised such a cry against the ministry, that they were obliged to bring Jemmison to a court-martial."

" The puppy ! I'm glad of it, with all my soul. And how did he look then ?" said Mr. Palmer.

" Vastly like a gentleman ; that was all that even his friends could say for him. The person he was most afraid of on the trial was Walsingham. In this apprehension he was confirmed by certain of his friends, who had attempted to sound Walsingham as to the nature of the evidence he intended to give.

They all reported, that they could draw nothing out of him, and that he was an impracticable fellow; for his constant answer was, that his evidence should be given in court, and nowhere else."

"Even to his most intimate friends," interrupted Mr. Beaumont; "even to me, who was in the house with him all the time the trial was going on, he did not tell what his evidence would be."

"When the day of trial came," pursued Mr. Walsingham——

"Don't forget admiral Dashleigh," said Mr. Beaumont.

"No; who can forget him that knows him?" said Walsingham: "a warm, generous friend, open-hearted as he is brave—he came to camp in Walsingham the day before the court-martial was to sit. 'I know, Walsingham, you don't like my cousin Jemmison (said he), nor do I much, for he is a puppy, and I never could like a puppy, related to me or not; be that as it may, you'll do him justice, I'm sure; for though he is a puppy, he is a brave fellow—and here, for party purposes, they have raised a cry of his being a coward, and want to shoot him *pour encourager les autres*. What you say will damn or save him; and I have too good an opinion of you to think that any old grudge, though you might have cause for it, would stand in his way.' Walsingham answered as usual, that his opinion and his evidence would be known on the day of trial. Dashleigh went away very ill-satisfied, and persuaded that Walsingham harboured revenge against his relation. At last, when he was called upon in court, Walsingham's conduct was both just and generous; for though his answers spoke the exact truth, yet he brought forward nothing to the disadvantage of Jemmison, but

what his examiners drew out ; and in his captain's favour, on the contrary, he spoke so strongly of his intrepidity, and of the gallant actions which in former instances he had performed in the service, as quite to efface the recollection of his foppery and epicurism ; and, as much as possible, to excuse his negligence. Walsingham's evidence absolutely confuted the unjust charge or suspicion of cowardice that had been raised against Jemmison ; and made such an impression in his favour, that Jemmison, instead of being dismissed the service, or even having his ship taken from him, as was expected, got off with a reprimand."

" Which I am sure he well deserved," said Mr. Palmer.

" But certainly Walsingham was right not to let him be run down by a popular cry, especially as he had used him ill," said Mr. Beaumont.

" Well, well !—I don't care about the puppy," cried Mr. Palmer ; " only go on."

" No sooner was the trial over, and the sentence of the court made known, than admiral Dashleigh, full of joy, admiration, and gratitude, pushed his way towards Walsingham, and stretching out his hand, exclaimed—' Shake hands, Walsingham, and forgive me, or I can't forgive myself. I suspected you yesterday morning of bearing malice against that coxcomb, who deserved to be laughed at, but not to be shot. By G——, Walsingham, you're an honest fellow, I find.' ' And have you but just found that out, admiral ?' said Walsingham, with a proud smile. ' Harkee, my lad,' said Dashleigh, calling after him, ' remember I'm *your* friend at all events—Take it as you will, I'll make you mine yet, before I've done with you.' Walsingham knew, that at this time

admiral Dashleigh's friends were in power, and that Dashleigh himself had great influence with the Admiralty; and he probably treated the admiral thus haughtily, to show that he had no interested views or hopes. Dashleigh understood this; for he now comprehended Walsingham's character perfectly. Immediately after the trial, Walsingham was made commander, in consequence of his having saved the Dreadnought, and his having taken l'Ambuscade. With this appointment Dashleigh had nothing to do. But he never ceased exerting himself, employing all the interest of his high connexions, and all the personal influence of his great abilities, to have Walsingham made post, and to get him a ship. He succeeded at last: but he never gave the least hint that it was done by his interest; for, he said, he knew that Walsingham had such nice notions, and was such a proud principled fellow, that he would not enjoy his promotion, if he thought he owed it to any thing upon earth but his own merit. So a handsome letter was written by the secretary of the Admiralty to captain Walsingham, by their lordships' desire, informing him, 'that in consideration of his services and merit, his majesty had been pleased to make him post-captain, and to appoint him to the command of l'Ambuscade (the prize he took), which would be sent out on the first occasion.' The secretary 'begged leave to add expressions of his private satisfaction on an appointment so likely to be advantageous to the public,' &c. In short, it was all done so properly and so plausibly, that even Walsingham never suspected any secret influence, nor did he find out the part Dashleigh had taken in the business till several months afterwards, when a *discreet* friend mentioned it by accident."

"I was that discreet friend," said Mr. Beaumont.

"Well, all this is very good, but there's no love in this story," said Mr. Palmer. "I hope your hero is not too proud to fall in love?"

"Too proud!—We are told, you know, that the greatest hero, in the intervals of war, resigned

'To tender passions all his mighty mind.'

"Tender passions!—Captain Walsingham is in love, then, hey?" said Mr. Palmer. "And may I ask—Bless me! I shall be very sorry if it is with any body but—May I ask to whom he is attached?"

"That is a question that I am not quite at liberty perhaps to answer," said Mr. Walsingham. "During the interval between his return in the Dreadnought and his being appointed to l'Ambuscade, an interval of about eighteen months, which he spent in the country here with me, he had time to become thoroughly acquainted with a very amiable young lady——"

"A very amiable young lady! and in this neighbourhood?" interrupted Mr. Palmer; "it must be the very person I mean, the very person I wish."

"Do not ask me any more," said Mr. Walsingham, "for my friend never declared his attachment, and I have no right to declare it for him. He was not, at the time I speak of, in circumstances to marry; therefore he honourably concealed, or rather suppressed, his passion, resolving not to attempt to engage the young lady's affections till he should have made a fortune sufficient to support her in her own rank in life."

"Well, now, that's all done, thank Heaven!" cried Palmer: "he has fortune enough now, or we

can help him out, you know. This is excellent, excellent!—Come, is it not time for us to go to the ladies? I'm impatient to tell this to Mrs. Beaumont."

"Stay, my good Mr. Palmer," said Mr. Walsingham. "What are you going to do?"

"Let me alone, let me alone—I'll only tell what I guess—depend upon it, I guess right—and it may do a great deal of good to tell it to Mrs. Beaumont, and it will give her a great deal of pleasure—trust me—trust me."

"I do trust *you*—but perhaps you may be mistaken."

"Not at all, not at all, depend upon it; so let me go to her this minute."

"But stop, my dear sir," cried Mr. Beaumont, "stop for another reason; let me beg you to sit down again—I am not clear that captain Walsingham is not at this instant in love with, perhaps, as it is reported, married to a Spanish lady, whom he has carried off out of a convent at *****, and whom I understand he is bringing home with him."

"Heyday! a Spanish lady!" said Mr. Palmer, returning slowly to his seat with a fallen countenance. "How's this?—By St. George, this is unlucky! But how's this, I say?"

"You did not let us finish our story," said Mr. Beaumont, "or we should have told you."

"Let me hear the end of it now," said Mr. Palmer, sitting down again, and preparing himself with several pinches of snuff. But just at this instant a servant came to say that coffee was ready.

"I will never stir from this spot for coffee or any thing else," said Mr. Palmer, "till I know the history of the Spanish lady."

"Then the shortest and best way I have of telling

it to you is, to beg you to read this letter, which contains all I know of the matter," said Mr. Beaumont. "This letter is from young Birch to his parents; we have never heard a syllable directly from Walsingham himself on this subject. Since he reached Lisbon, we have had no letters from him, except that short epistle which brought us an account of his taking the treasure-ship. But we shall see him soon, and know the truth of this story; and hear whether he prefers his Spanish or his English mistress."

"'Fore George! I wish this Spanish woman had staid in her convent," said Mr. Palmer; "I don't like runaway ladies. But let us see what this letter says for her."

The letter is the same that Mr. Beaumont read some time ago, therefore it need not here be inserted. Before Mr. Palmer had finished perusing it, a second message came to say that the ladies waited tea, and that Mrs. Beaumont wished not to be late going home, as there was no moon. Mr. Palmer, nevertheless, finished the letter before he stirred; and then, with a heavy sigh, he rose and said, "I now wish, more than ever, that our captain would come home this night, before I go, and clear up this business. I don't like this Spanish plot, this double intrigue. Ah, dear me!—I shall be obliged to sail—I shall be in Jamaica before the fifth act."

"How expectation loads the wings of time!" exclaimed Mrs. Beaumont, as the gentlemen entered the drawing-room. "Here we have been all day expecting our dear captain Walsingham, and the time has seemed so long!—The only time I ever found long in this house."

"I should like to know," said Mr. Walsingham, after a bow of due acknowledgment to Mrs. Beau-

mont for her compliment, " I should like to know whether time appears to pass most slowly to those that hope, or those that fear."

Mrs. Beaumont handed coffee to Mr. Palmer, without attempting to answer this question.

" To those that hope, I should think," said Mr. Palmer ; " for hope long deferred maketh the heart sick ; and time, I can answer for it, passes most slowly to those who are sick."

" ' Slow as the year's dull circle seems to run,
When the brisk minor pants for twenty-one,' "

said Mr. Walsingham, smiling, as he looked at young Beaumont. " But I think it is the mixture of fear with hope that makes time appear to pass slowly."

" And is hope ever free from that mixture?" said miss Walsingham. " Does not hope without fear become certainty, and fear without hope despair? Can hope ever be perfectly free from some mixture of fear?"

" O ! dear me, yes, to be sure," said miss Hunter, for hope's the most opposite thing that ever was to fear ; as different as black and white ; *for*, surely, every body knows that hope is just the contrary to fear ; and when one says *I hope*, one does not ever mean *I fear*—surely, you know, Mrs. Beaumont?"

" I am the worst metaphysician in the world," said Mrs. Beaumont ; " I have not head enough to analyse my heart."

" Nor I neither," said miss Hunter : " Heigho !" (very audibly.)

" Hark !" cried Mr. Beaumont, " I think I hear a horse galloping? It is he ! it is Walsingham !"

Out ran Beaumont, full speed, to meet his friend ; whilst, with more sober joy, Mr. Walsingham waited on the steps, where all the company assembled, Mr.

Palmer foremost, with a face full of benevolent pleasure: Mrs. Beaumont congratulating every body, but nobody listening to her; luckily for her, all were too heartily occupied with their own feelings to see how ill her countenance suited her words. The sound of the galloping of the horse ceased for a minute—then recommenced; but before it could be settled whether it was coming nearer or going farther away, Mr. Beaumont returned with a note in his hand.

“Not Walsingham—only Birch—confound him!” said Mr. Beaumont, out of breath. “Confound him, what a race I took, and how disappointed I was when I saw Birch’s face; and yet it is no fault of his, poor lad!”

“But why did not he come up to the house? Why did not you let us see him?” said Mr. Walsingham.

“I could not keep him, he was in such a hurry to go home to his father and mother, he would only stop to give this note.”

“From Walsingham? Read, quick.”

“Plymouth, 5 o’clock, A. M. just landed.

“Dear friends, I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you, as I had hoped to do, this day—I am obliged to go to London instantly on business that must not be delayed—Cannot tell when I can be with you—hope in a few days—Well and happy, and ever yours,

H. WALSINGHAM.”

All stood silent with looks of disappointment, except Mrs. Beaumont, who reiterated, “What a

pity ! What a sad pity ! What a disappointment ! What a terrible disappointment !”

“ Business !” said Mr. Beaumont : “ Curse his business ! he should think of his friends first.”

“ Most likely his business is for his friends,” said miss Walsingham.

“ That’s right, my dear little defender of the absent,” said Mr. Walsingham.

“ Business !” repeated Mr. Palmer. “ Hum ! I like business better than pleasure—I will be patient, if it is really business that keeps him away from us.”

“ Depend upon it,” said miss Walsingham, “ nothing but business can keep him away from us ; his pleasure is always at home.”

“ I am thinking,” said Mr. Palmer, drawing Mr. Walsingham aside, “ I am thinking whether he has really brought this Spanish lady home with him, and what will become of her—of him, I mean. I wish I was not going to Jamaica !”

“ Then, my dear sir, where is the necessity of your going ?”

“ My health—my health—the physicians say I cannot live in England.”

Mr. Walsingham, who had but little faith in physicians, laughed, and exclaimed, “ But, my dear sir, when you see so many men alive in England at this instant, why should you believe in the impossibility of your living even in this pestiferous country ?”

Mr. Palmer half smiled, felt for his snuff-box, and then replied, “ I am sure I should like to live in England, if my health would let me ; but,” continued he, his face growing longer, and taking the hypochondriac cast as he pronounced the word, “ but,

Mr. Walsingham, you don't consider that my health is really—really——”

“Really very good, I see,” interrupted Mr. Walsingham, “and I am heartily glad to see it.”

“Sir! sir! you do not see it, I assure you. I have a great opinion of your judgment, but as you are not a physician——”

“And because I have not taken out my diploma, you think I can neither see nor understand,” interrupted Mr. Walsingham. “But, nevertheless, give me leave to feel your pulse.”

“Do you really understand a pulse?” said Mr. Palmer, baring his wrist, and sighing.

“As good a pulse as ever man had,” pronounced Mr. Walsingham.

“You don't say so? why the physicians tell me——”

“Never mind what they tell you—if they told you the *truth*, they'd tell you they want fees.”

Mrs. Beaumont, quite startled by the tremendous loud voice in which Mr. Walsingham pronounced the word *truth*, rose, and rang the bell for her carriage.

“Mr. Palmer,” said she, “I am afraid we must run away, for I dread the night air for invalids.”

“My good madam, I am at your orders,” answered Mr. Palmer, buttoning himself up to the chin.

“Mrs. Beaumont, surely you don't think this gentleman an invalid?” said Mr. Walsingham.

“I only wish he would not think himself such,” replied Mrs. Beaumont.

“Ah! my dear friends,” said Mr. Palmer, “I really am, I certainly am a sad—sad——”

"Hypochondriac," said Mr. Walsingham. "Pardon me—you are indeed, and every body is afraid to tell you so but myself."

Mrs. Beaumont anxiously looked out of the window to see if her carriage was come to the door.

"Hypochondriac! not in the least, my dear sir," said Mr. Palmer. "If you were to hear what Dr. — and Dr. — say of my case, and your own Dr. Wheeler here, who has a great reputation too—shall I tell you what he says?"

In a low voice, Mr. Palmer, holding Mr. Walsingham by the button, proceeded to recapitulate some of Dr. Wheeler's prognostics; and at every pause, Mr. Walsingham turned impatiently, so as almost to twist off the detaining button, repeating, in the words of the king of Prussia to his physician, "*C'est un âne! C'est un âne! C'est un âne!*"—"Pshaw! I don't understand French," cried Mr. Palmer, angrily. His warmth obliged him to think of unbuttoning his coat, which operation (after stretching his neckcloth to remove an uneasy feeling in his throat) he was commencing, when Mrs. Beaumont graciously stopped his hand.

"The carriage is at the door, my dear sir:—instead of unbuttoning your coat, had not you better put this cambric handkerchief round your throat before we go into the cold air?"

Mr. Palmer put it on, as if in defiance of Mr. Walsingham, and followed Mrs. Beaumont, who led him off in triumph. Before he reached the carriage-door, however, his anger had spent its harmless force; and, stopping to shake hands with him, Mr. Palmer said, "My good Mr. Walsingham, I am obliged to you. I am sure you wish me well, and

I thank you for speaking so freely ; I love honest friends—but as to my being hypochondriac, believe me, you are mistaken !”

“ And as to Dr. Wheeler,” said Mrs. Beaumont, as she drew up the glass of the carriage, and as they drove from the door, “ Dr. Wheeler certainly does not deserve to be called *un âne*, for he is a man of whose medical judgment I have the highest opinion. Though I am sure I am very candid to acknowledge it in the present case, when his opinion is so much against my wishes, and all our wishes, and must, I fear, deprive us so soon of the company of our dear Mr. Palmer.”

“ Why, yes, I must go, I must go to Jamaica,” said Mr. Palmer, in a more determined tone than he had yet spoken on the subject.

Mrs. Beaumont silently rejoiced ; and as her son imprudently went on arguing in favour of his own wishes, she leaned back in the carriage, and gave herself up to a pleasing reverie, in which she anticipated the successful completion of all her schemes. Relieved from the apprehension that captain Walsingham’s arrival might disconcert her projects, she was now still further reassured by Mr. Palmer’s resolution to sail immediately. One day more, and she was safe. Let Mr. Palmer but sail without seeing captain Walsingham, and this was all Mrs. Beaumont asked of fortune ; the rest her own genius would obtain. She was so absorbed in thought, that she did not know she was come home, till the carriage stopped at her door. Sometimes, indeed, her reverie had been interrupted by Mr. Palmer’s praises of the Walsinghams, and by a conversation which she heard going on about captain Walsingham’s life and adventures : but captain Walsingham was safe in London ; and whilst

he was at that distance, she could bear to hear his eulogium. Having lamented that she had been deprived of her dear Amelia all this day, and having arranged her plan of operations for the morrow, Mrs. Beaumont retired to rest. And even in dreams her genius invented fresh expedients, wrote notes of apology, or made speeches of circumvention.

CHAPTER XI.

“ And now, as oft in some distemper’d state,
On one nice trick depends the gen’ral fate.”

POPE.

THAT old politician, the cardinal of Lorraine, used to say, that “ A lie believed but for one hour doth many times, in a nation, produce effects of seven years’ continuance.” At this rate, what wonderful effects might our heroine have produced, had she practised in public life, instead of confining her genius to family politics! The game seemed now in her own hands. The day, the important day, on which all her accounts with her son were to be settled; the day when Mr. Palmer’s will was to be signed, the last day he was to stay in England, arrived. Mr. Beaumont’s birthday, his coming of age, was of course hailed with every possible demonstration of joy. The village bells rang, the tenants were invited to a dinner and a dance, and an ox was to be roasted whole; and the preparations for rejoicing were heard all over the house. Mr. Palmer’s benevolent heart was ever ready to take a share in the pleasures of his fellow-creatures, especially in the festivities of the lower classes. He

appeared this morning in high good-humour. Mrs. Beaumont, with a smile on her lips, yet with a brow of care, was considering how she could make pleasure subservient to interest, and how she could get *business* done in the midst of the amusements of the day. Most auspiciously did her day of business begin by Mr. Palmer's declaring to her that his will was actually made; that with the exception of certain legacies, he had left his whole fortune to her during her life, with remainder to her son and daughter. "By this arrangement," continued he, "I trust I shall ultimately serve my good friends the Walsinghams, as I wish: for though I have not seen as much of that family as I should have been glad to have done, yet the little I have seen convinces me that they are worthy people."

"The most worthy people upon earth. You know I have the greatest regard for them," said Mrs. Beaumont.

"I am really sorry," pursued Mr. Palmer, "that I have not been able to make acquaintance with captain Walsingham. Mr. Walsingham told me his whole history yesterday, and it has prepossessed me much in his favour."

"He is, indeed, a charming, noble-hearted young hero," said Mrs. Beaumont; "and I regret, as much as you do, that you cannot see him before you leave England."

"However," continued Mr. Palmer, "as I was saying, the Walsinghams will, I trust, be the better sooner or later by me; for I think I foresee that captain Walsingham, if a certain Spanish lady were out of the question, would propose for Amelia, and would persuade her to give up this foolish fancy of hers for that baronet."

Mrs. Beaumont shook her head, as if she believed this could not possibly be done.

“ Well, well, if it can’t be, it can’t. The girl’s inclination must not be controlled. I don’t wonder, however, that you are vexed at missing such a husband for her as young Walsingham. But, my good madam, we must make the best of it—let the girl marry her baronet. I have left a legacy of some thousands to captain Walsingham, as a token of my esteem for his character ; and I am sure, my dear Mrs. Beaumont, his interests are in good hands, when I leave them in yours. In the mean time, I wish you, as the representative of my late good friend, colonel Beaumont, to enjoy all I have during your life.”

Mrs. Beaumont poured forth such a profusion of kind and grateful expressions, that Mr. Palmer was quite disconcerted. “ No more of this, my dear madam, no more of this. But there was something I was going to say, that has gone out of my head. O, it was, that the Walsinghams will, I think, stand a good chance of being the better for me in another way.”

“ How ?”

“ Why you have seen so much more of them than I have—don’t you, my dear madam, see, that miss Walsingham has made a conquest of your son ? I thought I was remarkably slow at seeing these things, and yet I saw it.”

“ Miss Walsingham is a prodigious favourite of mine. But you know Edward is so young, and men don’t like, nowadays, to marry young,” said Mrs. Beaumont.

“ Well, let them manage their affairs their own way,” said Mr. Palmer ; “ all I wish upon earth is

to see them happy, or rather to hear of their happiness, for I shall not see it, you know, in Jamaica."

"Alas!" said Mrs. Beaumont, in a most affectionate tone, and with a sigh that seemed to come from her heart; "alas! that is such a melancholy thought."

Mr. Palmer ended the conversation by inquiring whom he had best ask to witness his will. Mrs. Beaumont proposed captain Lightbody and Dr. Wheeler. The doctor was luckily in the house, for he had been sent for this morning, to see her poor Amelia, who had caught cold yesterday, and had a slight feverish complaint.

This was perfectly true. The anxiety that Amelia had suffered of late—the fear of being forced or ensnared to marry a man she disliked—apprehensions about the Spanish incognita, and at last the certainty that captain Walsingham would not arrive before Mr. Palmer should have left England, and that consequently the hopes she had formed from this benevolent friend's interference were vain—all these things had overpowered Amelia; she had passed a feverish night, and was really ill. Mrs. Beaumont, at any other time, would have been much alarmed; for, duplicity out of the question, she was a fond mother: but she now was well contented that her daughter should have a day's confinement to her room, for the sake of keeping her safe out of the way. So leaving poor Amelia to her feverish thoughts, we proceed with the business of the day.

Dr. Wheeler and Mr. Lightbody witnessed the will; it was executed, and a copy of it deposited with Mrs. Beaumont. This was one great point gained. The next object was her jointure. She had

employed her convenient tame man *, captain Lightbody, humbly to suggest to her son, that some increase of jointure would be proper ; and she was now in anxiety to know how these hints, and others which had been made by more remote means, would operate. As she was waiting to see Mr. Lightbody in her dressing-room, to hear the result of his *suggestions*, the door opened.

“ Well, Lightbody ! come in—what success ? ”

She stopped short, for it was not captain Lightbody, it was her son. Without taking any notice of what she said, he advanced towards her, and presented a deed.

“ You will do me the favour, mother, to accept of this addition to your jointure,” said he. “ It was always my intention to do this, the moment it should be in my power ; and I had flattered myself that you would not have thought it necessary to suggest to me what I knew I ought to do, or to hint to me your wishes by any intermediate person.”

Colouring deeply, for it hurt her conscience to be found out, Mrs. Beaumont was upon the point of disavowing her emissary, but she recollected that the words which she had used when her son was coming into the room might have betrayed her. On the other hand, it was not certain that he had heard them. She hesitated. From the shame of a disavowal, which would have answered no purpose but to sink her lower in her son’s opinion, she was, however, saved by his abrupt sincerity.

* This reminds us of an expression of Charles the Second.—
“ It is very strange, that every one of my friends keeps a *tame knave*.”

Note by the Editor.

“Don’t say any thing more about it, dear mother,” cried he, “but pardon me the pain I have given you at a time when indeed I wished only to give pleasure. Promise me, that in future you will let me know your wishes directly, and from your own lips.”

“Undoubtedly—depend upon it, my dearest son. I am quite overpowered. The fact was, that I could not, however really and urgently necessary it was to me, bring myself to mention with my own lips what, as a direct request from me, I knew you could not and would not refuse, however inconvenient it might be to you to comply. On this account, and on this account only, I wished you not to know my wants from myself, but from an intermediate friend.”

“Friend!”—Mr. Beaumont could not help repeating with an emphasis of disdain.

“*Friend*, I only said by courtesy; but I wished you to know my wants from an intermediate person, that you might not feel yourself in any way bound, or called upon, and that the refusal might be implied and tacit, as it were, so that it could lead to no unpleasant feelings between us.”

“Ah! my dear mother,” said Mr. Beaumont, “I have not your knowledge of the world, or of human nature; but from all I have heard, seen, and felt, I am convinced that more unpleasant feelings are created in families, by these false delicacies, and managements, and hints, and go-between friends by courtesy, than ever would have been caused by the parties speaking directly to one another, and telling the plain truth about their thoughts and wishes. Forgive me if I speak too plainly at this moment; as we are to live together, I hope, many years, it may spare us many an unhappy hour.”

Mrs. Beaumont wiped her eyes. Her son found

it difficult to go on, and yet, upon his own principles, it was right to proceed.

"Amelia, ma'am! I find she is ill this morning."

"Yes—poor child!"

"I hope, mother——"

"Since," interrupted, Mrs. Beaumont, "my dear son wishes always to hear from me the plain and direct truth, I must tell him, that, as the guardian of his sister, I think myself accountable to no one for my conduct with respect to her; and that I should look upon any interference as an unkind and unjustifiable doubt of my affection for my daughter. Rest satisfied with this assurance, that her happiness is, in all I do, my first object: and, as I have told her a thousand times, no force shall be put on her inclinations."

"I have no more to say, no more to ask," said Mr. Beaumont. "This is a distinct, positive declaration, in which I will confide, and, in future, not suffer appearances to alarm me. A mother would not keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope."

Mrs. Beaumont, feeling herself change countenance, made an attempt to blow her nose, and succeeded in hiding her face with her handkerchief.

"With respect to myself," continued Mr. Beaumont, "I should also say, lest you should be in any doubt concerning my sentiments, that though I have complied with your request to delay for a few weeks——"

"*That* you need not repeat, my dear," interrupted Mrs. Beaumont. "I understand all that perfectly."

"Then at the end of this month I shall—and, I hope, with your entire approbation, propose for miss Walsingham."

"Time enough," said Mrs. Beaumont, smiling, and tapping her son playfully on the shoulder, "time enough to talk of that when the end of the month comes. How often have I seen young men like you change their minds, and fall in and out of love in the course of one short month! At any rate," continued Mrs. Beaumont, "let us pass to the order of the day; for we have time enough to settle other matters; but the order of the day—a tiresome one, I confess—is to settle accounts."

"I am ready——"

"So am I."

"Then let us go with the accounts to Mr. Palmer, who is also ready, I am sure."

"But, before we go," said Mrs. Beaumont, whispering, "let us settle what is to be said about the debts—*your* debts, you know—the 5000*l.* you know. I fancy you'll agree with me, that the less is said about this the better; and that, in short, the best will be to say nothing."

"Why so, madam? Surely you don't think I mean to conceal my debts from our friend Mr. Palmer, at the very moment when I profess to tell him all my affairs, and to settle accounts with him and you, as my guardians!"

"With him? But he has never acted, you know, as one of the guardians; therefore you are not called upon to settle accounts with him."

"Then why, ma'am, did you urge him to come down from London, to be present at the settlement of these accounts?"

"As a compliment, and because I wish him to be present, as your father's friend; but it is by no means essential that he should know every detail."

"I will do whichever you please, ma'am; I will either settle accounts with or without him."

"Oh! *with* him, that is, in his presence, to be sure."

"Then he must know the whole."

"Why so? Your having contracted such debts will alter his opinion of your prudence and of mine, and may, perhaps, essentially alter—alter——"

"His will? Be it so; that is the worst that can happen. As far as I am concerned, I would rather a thousand times it were so, than deceive him into a better opinion of me than I deserve."

"Nobly said! so like yourself, and like every thing I could wish: but, forgive me, if I did for you, what indeed I would not wish you to do for yourself. I have already told Mr. Palmer that you had no embarrassments; therefore, you cannot, and I am sure would not, unsay what I have said."

Mr. Beaumont stood fixed in astonishment:

"But why, mother, did not you tell him the whole?"

"My dear love, delicacy prevented me. He offered to relieve you from any embarrassments, if you had any; but I, having too much delicacy and pride to let my son put himself under pecuniary obligations, hastily answered, that you had no debts; for there was no other reply to be made, without offending poor Palmer, and hurting his generous feelings, which I would not do for the universe: and I considered too, that as all Palmer's fortune will come to us in the end——"

"Well, ma'am," interrupted Mr. Beaumont, impatient of all these glosses and excuses, "the plain state of the case is, that I cannot contradict what my

mother has said ; therefore I will not settle accounts at all with Mr. Palmer."

" And what excuse *can* I make to him, after sending for him express from London ?"

" That I must leave to you, mother."

" And what reason *can* I give for thus withdrawing our family-confidence from such an old friend, and at the very moment when he is doing so much for us all ?"

" That I must leave to you, mother. I withdraw no confidence. I have pretended none—I will break none."

" Good Heavens ! was not all I did and said for *your* interest ?"

" Nothing can be for my interest that is not for my honour, and for yours, mother. But let us never go over the business more. Now to the order of the day."

" My dear, dear son !" said Mrs. Beaumont, " don't speak so roughly, so cruelly to me."

Suddenly softened, by seeing the tears standing in his mother's eyes, he besought her pardon for the bluntness of his manner, and expressed his entire belief in her affection and zeal for his interests ; but, on the main point, that he would not deceive Mr. Palmer, or directly or indirectly assert a falsehood, Mr. Beaumont was immoveable. In the midst of her entreaties, a message came from Mr. Palmer, to say that he was waiting for the accounts, which Mrs. Beaumont wished to settle. " Well," said she, much perplexed, " well, come down to him—come, for it is impossible for me to find any excuse after sending for him from London ; he would think there was something worse than there really is. Stay—I'll go down first, and sound him ; and if it won't do with-

out the accounts, do you come when I ring the bell ; then all I have for it is to run my chance. Perhaps he may never recollect what passed about your debts, for the dear good old soul has not the best memory in the world ; and if he should obstinately remember, why, after all, it is only a bit of false delicacy, and a white lie for a friend and a son, and we can colour it."

Down went Mrs. Beaumont to sound Mr. Palmer ; but though much might be expected from her address, yet she found it unequal to the task of convincing this gentleman's plain good sense that it would fatigue him to see those accounts, which he came so many miles on purpose to settle. Perceiving him begin to waken to the suspicion that she had some interest in suppressing the accounts, and hearing him, in an altered tone, ask, " Madam, is there any mystery in these accounts, that I must not see them ?" she instantly rang the bell, and answered, " O, none ; none in the world ; only we thought—that is, I feared it might fatigue you too much, my dear friend, just the day before your journey, and I was unwilling to lose so many hours of your good company ; but since you are so very kind—here's my son and the papers."

CHAPTER XII.

“A face untaught to feign ; a judging eye,
That darts severe upon a rising lie,
And strikes a blush through frontless flattery.”

To the settlement of accounts they sat down in due form ; and it so happened, that though this dear good old soul had not the best memory in the world, yet he had an obstinate recollection of every word Mrs. Beaumont had said about her son's having no debts or embarrassments. And great and unmanageable was his astonishment, when the truth came to light. “It is not,” said he, turning to Mr. Beaumont, “that I am astonished at your having debts ; I am sorry for that, to be sure ; but young men are often a little extravagant or so, and I dare say—particularly as you are so candid, and make no excuses about it—I dare say you will be more prudent in future, and give up the race-horses, as you promise. But—why did not madam Beaumont tell me the truth ? Why make a mystery, when I wanted nothing but to serve my friends ? It was not using me well—it was not using yourself well. Madam, madam, I am vexed to the heart, and would not for a thousand pounds—ay, fool as I am, not for ten thousand pounds, this had happened to me from my good friend the colonel's widow—a man that would as soon have cut his hand off. Oh, madam ! madam Beaumont ! you have struck me a hard blow at my time of life. Any thing but this I could have borne ; but to have one's confidence and old friendships shaken at my time of life !”

Mrs. Beaumont was, in her turn, in unfeigned astonishment ; for Mr. Palmer took the matter more seriously, and seemed more hurt by this discovery of a trifling deviation from truth, than she had foreseen, or than she could have conceived to be possible, in a case where neither his interest nor any one of his passions was concerned. It was in vain that she palliated and explained, and talked of delicacy, and generosity, and pride, and maternal feelings, and the feelings of a friend, and all manner of fine and double-refined sentiments ; still Mr. Palmer's sturdy plain sense could not be made to comprehend that a falsehood is not a falsehood, or that deceiving a friend is using him well. Her son suffered for her, as his countenance and his painful and abashed silence plainly showed.

“ And does not even my son say any thing for me ? Is this friendly ? ” said she, unable to enter into his feelings, and thinking that the part of a friend was to make apologies, right or wrong.—Mr. Palmer shook hands with Mr. Beaumont, and, without uttering a syllable, they understood one another perfectly. Mr. Beaumont left the room ; and Mrs. Beaumont burst into tears. Mr. Palmer, with great good-nature, tried to assuage that shame and compunction which he imagined that she felt. He observed, that, to be sure, she must feel mortified and vexed with herself, but that he was persuaded nothing but some mistaken notion of delicacy could have led her to do what her principles must condemn. Immediately she said all that she saw would please Mr. Palmer ; and, following the lead of his mind, she at last confirmed him in the opinion, that this was an accidental not an habitual deviation from truth.

His confidence in her was broken, but not utterly destroyed.

"As to the debt," resumed Mr. Palmer, "do not let that give you a moment's concern; I will put that out of the question in a few minutes. My share in the cargo of the *Anne*, which I see is just safely arrived in the Downs, will more than pay this debt. Your son shall enter upon his estate unencumbered. No, no—don't thank me; I won't cheat you of your thanks; it is your son must thank me for this. I do it on his account. I like the young man. There is an ingenuousness, an honourable frankness about him, that I love. Instead of his bond for the money, I shall ask his promise never to have any thing more to do with race-horses or Newmarket; and his promise I shall think as good as if it were his bond. Now I am not throwing money away; I'm not doing an idle ostentatious thing, but one that may, and I hope will, be essentially useful. For, look you here, my good—look here, Mrs. Beaumont: a youth who finds himself encumbered with debt on coming to his estate is apt to think of freeing himself by marrying a fortune instead of a woman; now instead of freeing a man, this fetters him for life: and what sort of a friend must that be, who, if he could prevent it, would let this be done for a few thousand pounds? So I'll go before I take another pinch of snuff, and draw him an order upon the cargo of the *Anne*, lest I should forget it in the hurry of packing and taking leave, and all those uncomfortable things."

He left *madam* Beaumont to her feelings, or her reflections; and, in a few minutes, with an order for five thousand pounds in his hand, went over the house in search of his young friend. Mr. Beaumont

came out of his sister's room on hearing himself called.

"Here," said Mr. Palmer, "is a little business for you to do. Read this order over; see that it is right, and endorse it—mind—and never let me hear one word more about it—only by way of acknowledgment—ask your mother what you are to give me. But don't read it till you are out of my sight—Is Amelia up? Can I see her?"

"Yes; up and in her dressing-room. Do, dear sir, go in and see her, for my mother says she is too feverish to leave her room to-day; but I am sure that it will make her ten times worse to be prevented from seeing you the last day you are with us."

"Does the little gipsy then care so much for me?—that's fair; for I am her friend, and will prove it to her, by giving up my own fancies to hers: so trust me with her, *tête-à-tête*, young gentleman; go off, if you please, and do your own business."

Mr. Palmer knocked at Amelia's door, and fancying he heard an answer of admittance, went in.

"O Mr. Palmer, my good Mr. Palmer, is it you?"

"Yes; but you seem not above half to know whether you are glad or sorry to see your good Mr. Palmer; for while you hold out your hand, you turn away your face from me.—Dear, dear! what a burning hand, and how the pulse goes and flutters! What does Dr. Wheeler say to this? I am a bit of a physician myself—let me look at you. What's this? eyes as red as ferret's—begging your eyes' pardon, young lady—What's this about? Come," said he, drawing a chair and sitting down close beside her, "no mysteries—no mysteries—I hate mysteries; besides, we have not time for them. Consider, I go

to-morrow, and have all my shirts to pack up: ay, smile, lady, as your father used to do; and open your whole heart to me, as he always did. Consider me as an old friend."

"I do consider you as a sincere, excellent friend," said Amelia; "but——" Amelia knew that she could not explain herself without disobeying, and perhaps betraying, her mother.

"No *buts*," said Mr. Palmer, taking hold of her hand. "Come, my little Amelia, before you have put that ring on and off your pretty finger fifty times more, tell me whom you would wish to put a ring on this finger for life?"

"Ah! that is the thing *I cannot* tell you!" said Amelia. "Were I alone concerned, I would tell you every thing; but—ask me no more, I cannot tell you the whole truth."

"Then there's something wrong somewhere or other. Whenever people tell me they cannot speak the truth, I always say, then there's something wrong. Give me leave, Amelia, to ask——"

"Don't question me," said Amelia: "talk to my mother. I don't know how I ought to answer you."

"*Not know how!* 'Fore George! this is strange! A strange house, where one can't get at the simplest truth without a world of difficulty—mother and daughter all alike; not one of 'em but the son can, for the soul of 'em, give a plain answer to a plain question. *Not know how!* as if it was a science to tell the truth. *Not know how!*—as if a person could not talk to me, honest old Richard Palmer, without *knowing how!* as if it was how to baffle a lawyer on a cross-examination—*Not know how* to answer one's own friend! Ah, this is not the way your father and I used to go on, miss Beaumont. Nay, nay, don't

cry now, or that will finish oversetting the little temper I have left, for I can't bear to see a woman cry, especially a young woman like you ; it breaks my heart, old as it is, and fool that I am, that ought to know your sex better by this time than to let a few tears drown my common sense. Well, young lady, be that as it may, since you won't tell me your mind, I must tell you your mind, for I happen to know it— Yes, I do—your mother bid me spare your delicacy, and I would, but that I have not time ; besides, I don't understand, nor see what good is got, but a great deal of mischief, by these cursed new-fashioned delicacies : wherefore, in plain English, I tell you, I don't like sir John Hunter, and I do like captain Walsingham ; and I did wish you married to captain Walsingham—you need not start so, for I say *did*—I don't wish it now ; for since your heart is set upon sir John Hunter, God forbid I should want to give captain Walsingham a wife without a heart. So I have only to add, that, notwithstanding my own fancy or judgment, I have done my best to persuade your mother to let you have the man, or the baronet, of your choice. I will go farther : I'll make it a point with her, and bring you both together ; for there's no other way, I see, of understanding you ; and get a promise of her consent ; and then I hope I shall leave you all satisfied, and without any mysteries. And, in the mean time," added Mr. Palmer, taking out of his coat pocket a morocco leather case, and throwing it down on the table before Amelia, "every body should be made happy their own way : there are some diamonds for lady Hunter, and God bless you."

"Oh, sir, stay !" cried Amelia, rising eagerly, "dear, good Mr. Palmer, keep your diamonds, and leave me your esteem and love."

"That I can't, unless you speak openly to me. It is out of nature. Don't kneel—don't. God bless you! young lady, you have my pity; for indeed," turning and looking at her, "you seem very miserable, and look very sincere."

"If my mother was here!—I *must* see my mother," exclaimed Amelia.

"Where's the difficulty? I'll go for her this instant," said Mr. Palmer, who was not a man to let a romance trail on to six volumes for want of going six yards; or for want of somebody's coming into a room at the right minute for explanation; or from some of those trivial causes by which adepts contrive to delude us at the very moment of expectation. Whilst Mr. Palmer was going for Mrs. Beaumont, Amelia waited in terrible anxiety. The door was open; and as she looked into the gallery which led to her room, she saw Mr. Palmer and her mother as they came along, talking together. Knowing every symptom of suppressed passion in her mother's countenance, she was quite terrified, by indications which passed unnoticed by Mr. Palmer. As her mother approached, Amelia hid her face in her hands for a moment; but gaining courage from the consciousness of integrity, and from a determination to act openly, she looked up; and, rising with dignity, said, in a gentle but firm voice—"Mother, I hope you will not think that there is any impropriety in my speaking to our friend, Mr. Palmer, with the same openness with which I have always spoken to you?"

"My dear child," interrupted Mrs. Beaumont, embracing Amelia with a sudden change of manner and countenance, "my sweet child, I have tried you to the utmost; forgive me; all your trials now are over, and you must allow me the pleasure of telli-

our excellent friend Mr. Palmer, what I know will delight him almost as much as it delights me—that the choice of Amelia's heart, Mr. Palmer, is worthy of her, just what we all wished."

"Captain Walsingham?" exclaimed Mr. Palmer, with joyful astonishment.

"Sit down, my love," said Mrs. Beaumont, seating Amelia, who from the surprise at this sudden change in her mother, and from the confusion of feelings which overwhelmed her at this moment, was near fainting: "we are too much for her; I have been too abrupt," continued Mrs. Beaumont. "Open the window, will you, my good sir? and," whispering, "let us not say any more to her at present; you see it won't do."

"I am well, quite well again, now," said Amelia, exerting herself. "Don't leave, don't forsake me, Mr. Palmer; pray, don't go," holding out her hand to Mr. Palmer.

"My dear Amelia," said Mrs. Beaumont, "don't talk, don't exert yourself; pray lie still on the sofa."

"Her colour is come back; she looks like herself again," said Mr. Palmer, seating himself beside her, regardless of Mrs. Beaumont's prohibitory looks. "Since my little Amelia wishes me to stay, I will not go. So, my child—but I won't hurry you—I only want one sign of the head to confirm the truth of what your mother has just told me, for nobody can tell what passes in a young lady's heart but herself. So then, it is not that sprig of quality, that selfish spendthrift, that sir John Hunter, who has your heart—hey?"

"No, no, no," answered Amelia; "I never did, I never could like such a man!"

"Why, I thought not—I thought it was impossible; but——"

Mrs. Beaumont, alarmed beyond conception, suddenly put her hand before Mr. Palmer's mouth, to prevent him from finishing his sentence, and exposing the whole of her shameful duplicity to her daughter.

"Absolutely I must, and do hereby interpose my maternal authority, and forbid all agitating explanations whilst Amelia is in her present state. Dr. Wheeler says she is terribly feverish. Come, Mr. Palmer, I must carry you off by force, and from me you shall have all the explanations and all the satisfaction you can require."

"Well," said Mr. Palmer, "good b'ye for the present, my little Amelia, my darling little Amelia! I am so delighted to find that captain Walsingham's the man, and so glad you have no mysteries—be well, be well soon; I am so pleased, so happy, that I am as unruly as a child, and as easily managed. You see how I let myself be turned out of the room."

"Not turned out, only carried out," said Mrs. Beaumont, who never, even in the most imminent perils, lost her polite presence of mind. Having thus carried off Mr. Palmer, she was in hopes, that, in the joyful confusion of his mind, he would be easily satisfied with any plausible explanation. Therefore she dexterously fixed his attention on the future, and adverted as slightly as possible to the past.

"Now, my good sir, congratulate me," said she, "on the prospect I have of happiness in such a son-in-law as captain Walsingham, if it be indeed true that captain Walsingham is really attached to Amelia. But, on the other hand, what shall we do, if there is any truth in the story of the Spanish lady? Oh, there's the difficulty! Between hope and fear, I am in such a distracted state at this moment, I

hardly know what I say. What shall we do about the Spanish lady?"

"Do, my dear madam! we can do nothing at all in that case. But I will hope the best, and you'll see that he will prove a constant man at last. In the mean time, how was all that about sir John Hunter, and what are you to do with him?"

"Leave that to me; I will settle all that," cried Mrs. Beaumont.

"But I hope the poor man, though I don't like him, has not been jilted?"

"No, by no means; Amelia's incapable of that. You know she told you just now that she never liked him."

"Ay; but I think, madam, you told me, that she *did*," said Mr. Palmer, sticking to his point with a decided plainness, which quite 'disconcerted Mrs. Beaumont.

"It was all a mistake," said she, "quite a mistake; and I am sure you rejoice with me that it was so: and, as to the rest—past blunders, like past misfortunes, are good for nothing but to be forgotten."

Observing that Mr. Palmer looked dissatisfied, Mrs. Beaumont continued apologising. "I confess you have to all appearance some cause to be angry with me," said she: "but now only hear me. Taking the blame upon myself, let me candidly tell you the whole truth, and all my reasons, foolish perhaps as they were. Captain Walsingham behaved so honourably, and had such command over his feelings, that I, who am really the most credulous creature in the world, was so completely deceived, that I fancied he never had a thought of Amelia, and that he never would think of her; and I own this both roused my

pride and my prudence for my daughter: and I certainly thought it my duty, as her mother, to do every thing in my power to discourage in her young and innocent heart a hopeless passion. It was but within these few hours that I have been undeceived by you as to his sentiments. That of course made an immediate change, as you have seen, in my measures; for such is my high opinion of the young man, and indeed my desire to be connected with the Walsinghams is so great, that even whilst I am in total ignorance of what the amount or value may be of this prize that he has taken, and even whilst I am in doubt concerning this Spanish incognita, I have not hesitated to declare, perhaps imprudently, to Amelia, as you have just heard, my full approbation of the choice of her heart."

"Hum!—well—hey!—How's this?" said Mr. Palmer to himself, as he tried to believe and to be satisfied with this apology. "Madam," said he aloud to Mrs. Beaumont, "I comprehend that it might not be prudent to encourage Amelia's partiality for captain Walsingham, till you were sure of the young man's sentiments. But, excuse me, I am a very slow, unpractised man in these matters, I don't yet understand why you told *me* that she was in love with sir John Hunter?"

Mrs. Beaumont, being *somewhat in the habits of self-contradiction*, was seldom unprovided with a concordance of excuses; but, at this unlucky moment, she was found unprepared. Hesitating she stood, all subtle as she was, deprived of ready wit, and actually abashed in the presence of a plain good man.

"I candidly confess, my dear sir," said she, apologising to Mr. Palmer as he walked up and down, "that my delicacy, or pride, call it what you will,

my false pride for my daughter, led me into an error. I could not bring myself to acknowledge to any man, even to you, for you know that it's contrary quite to the principles and pride of our sex—that she felt any partiality for a man who had shown none for her. You must be sensible it was, to say no more, an awkward, mortifying thing. And I was so afraid even of your finding it out, that, forgive me, I did, I candidly acknowledge, fabricate the foolish story of sir John Hunter. But, believe me, I never seriously thought of her marrying him.”

“‘Fore George! I don't understand one word of it from beginning to end,” said Mr. Palmer, speaking aloud to himself.

Regardless of the profusion of words which Mrs. Beaumont continued pouring forth, he seated himself in an arm-chair, and deep in reverie for some minutes, went on slowly striking his hands together, as he leaned with his arms on his knees. At length he rose, rang the bell, and said to the servant, “Sir, be so obliging as to let my man Creighton know that he need not hurry himself to pack up my clothes, for I shall not go to-morrow.”

Struck with consternation at these words, Mrs. Beaumont, nevertheless, commanded the proper expression of joy on the occasion.—“Delightful! I must go this instant,” cried she, “and be the first to tell this charming news to Amelia and Beaumont.”

“Tell them then, madam, if you please, that I have gained such a conquest over what Mr. Walsingham calls my hypochondriacism, that I am determined, at whatever risk, to stay another year in Old England, and that I hope to be present at both their weddings.”

Mrs. Beaumont's quick exit was at this moment

necessary to conceal her dismay. Instead of going to Amelia, she hurried to her own room, locked the door, and sat down to compose her feelings and to collect her thoughts. But scarcely had she been two minutes in her apartment, when a messenger came to summon her to the festive scene in the park. The tenants and villagers were all at dinner, and Mr. Beaumont sent to let her know that they were waiting to drink her health. She was obliged to go, and to appear all radiant with pleasure. The contrast between their honest mirth and her secret sufferings was great. She escaped as soon as she could from their *senseless* joy, and again shut herself up in her own room.

This sudden and totally unexpected resolution of Mr. Palmer's so astonished her, that she could scarcely believe she had heard or understood his words rightly. Artful persons may, perhaps, calculate with expertness and accuracy what will, in any given case, be the determinations of the selfish and the interested; but they are liable to frequent mistakes in judging of the open-hearted and the generous: there is no sympathy to guide them, and all their habits tend to mislead them in forming opinions of the direct and sincere. It had never entered into Mrs. Beaumont's imagination that Mr. Palmer would, notwithstanding his belief that he hazarded his life by so doing, defer a whole year returning to Jamaica, merely to secure the matrimonial happiness of her son and daughter. She plainly saw that he now suspected her dislike to the Walsinghams, and her aversion to the double union with that family: she saw that the slightest circumstance in her conduct, which confirmed his suspicions, would not only utterly ruin her in his opinion, but might induce him to

alter that part of his will which left her sole possessor of his fortune during her life. Bad as her affairs were at this moment, she knew that they might still be worse. She recollected the letter of *perfect approbation* which sir John Hunter had in his power. She foresaw that he would produce this letter on the first rumour of her favouring another lover for Amelia. She had just declared to Mr. Palmer, that she never seriously thought of sir John Hunter for her daughter; and should this letter be brought to light, she must be irremediably convicted of the basest duplicity, and there would be no escape from the shame of falsehood, or, rather, the disgrace of detection. In this grand difficulty, Mrs. Beaumont was too good a politician to waste time upon any inferior considerations. Instead of allowing her leisure to reflect that all her present difficulties arose from her habits of insincerity, she, with the true spirit of intrigue, attributed her disappointments to some deficiency of artifice. "Oh!" said she to herself, "why did I *write*! I should only have *spoken* to sir John. How could I be so imprudent as to *commit* myself by writing! But what can be done to repair this error?"

One web destroyed, she, with indefatigable subtlety, began to weave another. With that promptitude of invention, which practice alone can give, she devised a scheme, by which she hoped not only to prevent sir John Hunter from producing the written proof of her duplicity, but by which she could also secure the reversionary title, and the great Wigram estate. The nature of the scheme shall be unfolded in the next chapter; and it will doubtless procure for Mrs. Beaumont, from all proper judges, a just tribute of admiration. They will allow our heroine to be pos-

sessed not only of that address, which is the peculiar glory of female politicians, but also of that masculine quality, which the greatest, wisest, of mankind has pronounced to be the first, second, and third requisite for business—" Boldness—boldness—boldness."

CHAPTER XIII.

"The creature's at her dirty work again."

POPE.

AMONGST the infinite petty points of cunning of which that great practical philosopher Bacon has in vain essayed to make out a list, he notes, that, "Because it worketh better when any thing seemeth to be gotten from you by question than if you offer it of yourself: you may lay a bait for a question, by showing another visage and countenance than you are wont, to the end to give occasion to the party to ask what the matter is of the change."

"What is the matter, my dearest Mrs. Beaumont? I never saw you look so sad before in all my life," said miss Hunter, meeting Mrs. Beaumont, who had walked out into the park on purpose to be so met, and in hopes of having the melancholy of her countenance thus observed. It was the more striking, and the more unseasonable, from its contrast with the gay scene in the park. The sound of music was heard, and the dancing had begun, and all was rural festivity: "What is the matter, my dearest Mrs. Beaumont?" repeated miss Hunter;

“ at such a time as this to see you look so melancholy !”

“ Ah ! my love ! such a sad change in affairs ! But,” whispered Mrs. Beaumont, “ I cannot explain myself before your companion.”

Mr. Lightbody was walking with miss Hunter : but he was so complaisant, that he was easily despatched on some convenient errand ; and then Mrs. Beaumont, with all her wonted delicacy of circumlocution, began to communicate her distress to her young friend.

“ You know, my beloved Albina,” said she, “ it has been my most ardent wish that your brother should be connected with my family by the nearest and dearest ties.”

“ Yes ; that is, married to Amelia,” said miss Hunter. “ And has any thing happened to prevent it ?”

“ O, my dear ! it is all over ! It cannot be—must not be thought of—must not be spoken of any more ; Mr. Palmer has been outrageous about it. Such a scene as I have had ! and all to no purpose. Amelia has won him over to her party. Only conceive what I felt—she declared, beyond redemption, her preference of captain Walsingham.”

“ Before the captain proposed for her ! How odd ! dear ! Suppose he should never propose for her, what a way she will be in after affronting my brother and all ! And only think ! she gives up the title, and the great Wigram estate, and every thing. Why, my brother says, uncle Wigram can’t live three months ; and lord Puckeridge’s title, too, will come to my brother, you know ; and Amelia might have been lady Puckeridge. Only think ! Did you ever know any thing so foolish ?”

"Never!" said Mrs. Beaumont; "but you know, my dear, so few girls have the sense you show in taking advice: they all will judge for themselves. But I'm most hurt by Amelia's want of gratitude and delicacy towards *me*," continued Mrs. Beaumont: "only conceive the difficulty and distress in which she has left me about your poor brother. Such a shock as the disappointment will be to him! And he may—though Heaven knows how little I deserve it—he may suspect—for men, when they are vexed and angry, will, you know, suspect even their best friends; he might, I say, suspect me of not being warm in his cause."

"Dear, no! I have always told him how kind you were, and how much you wished the thing; and of all people in the world he can't blame you, dearest Mrs. Beaumont."

At this instant, Mrs. Beaumont saw a glimpse of somebody in a by-path of the shrubbery near them. "Hush! Take care! Who is that lurking there? Some listener! Who can it be?"

Miss Hunter applied her glass to her eye, but could not make out who it was.

"It is Lightbody, I declare," said Mrs. Beaumont. "Softly,—let us pretend not to see him, and watch what he will do. It is of the greatest consequence to me to know whether he is a listener or not; so much as he is about the house."

An irresistible fit of giggling, which seized miss Hunter at the odd way in which Lightbody walked, prevented Mrs. Beaumont's trial of his curiosity. At the noise which the young lady made, Mr. Lightbody turned his head, and immediately advancing, with his accustomed mixture of effrontery and servility, said, that "he had executed Mrs. Beaumont's com-

mands, and that he had returned in hopes of getting a moment to say a word to her when she was at leisure, about something he had just learned from Mr. Palmer's man Creighton, which it was of consequence she should know without delay."

"O, thank you, you best of creatures; but I know all that already."

"You know that Mr. Palmer does not go to-morrow?"

"Yes; and am so rejoiced at it! Do, my dear Lightbody, go to Amelia and my son, from me, and tell them that charming news. And after that, pray have the compassion to inquire if the post is not come in yet, and run over the papers to see if you can find any thing about Walsingham's prize."

Mr. Lightbody obeyed, but not with his usual alacrity. Mrs. Beaumont mused for a moment, and then said, "I do believe he was listening. What could he be doing there?"

"Doing!—O, nothing," said miss Hunter: "he's never doing any thing, you know; and as to listening, he was so far off he could not hear a word we said: besides he is such a simple creature, and loves you so!"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Beaumont; "he either did not play me fair, or else he did a job I employed him in this morning so awkwardly, that I never wish to employ him again. He is but a *low* kind of person, after all; I'll get rid of him: those sort of people always grow tiresome and troublesome after a time, and one must shake them off. But I have not leisure to think of him now—Well, my dear, to go on with what I was saying to you."

Mrs. Beaumont went on talking of her friendship for sir John Hunter, and of the difficulty of appeasing

him ; but observing that miss Hunter listened only with forced attention, she paused to consider what this could mean. Habitually suspicious, like all insincere people, Mrs. Beaumont now began to imagine that there was some plot carrying on against her by sir John Hunter and Lightbody, and that miss Hunter was made use of against her. Having a most contemptible opinion of her Albina's understanding, and knowing that her young friend had too little capacity to be able to deceive her, or to invent a plausible excuse impromptu, Mrs. Beaumont turned quick, and exclaimed, " My dear, what could Lightbody be saying to you when I came up—for I remember he stopped short, and you both looked so guilty ? "

" Guilty ! did I ?—Did he ?—Dearest Mrs. Beaumont, don't look at me so with your piercing eyes !—O ! I vow and protest I can't tell you ; I won't tell you."

The young lady tittered, and twisted herself into various affected attitudes ; then kissing Mrs. Beaumont, and then turning her back with childish playfulness, she cried, " No, I won't tell you ; never, never, never ! "

" Come, come, my dear, don't trifle ; I have really business to do, and am in a hurry."

" Well, don't look at me—never look at me again—promise me that, and I'll tell you. Poor Lightbody—O you're looking at me !—Poor Lightbody was talking to me of *somebody*, and he laid me a wager—but I can't tell you that—Ah, don't be angry with me, and I will tell, if you'll turn your head quite away !—that I should be married to *somebody* before the end of this year. O, now, don't look at me, dearest, dearest Mrs. Beaumont."

" You dear little simpleton, and was that all ? "

said Mrs. Beaumont, vexed to have wasted her time upon such folly: "come, be serious now, my dear; if you knew the anxiety I am in at this moment——" But wisely judging that it would be in vain to hope for any portion of the love-sick damsel's attention, until she had confirmed her hopes of being married to *somebody* before the end of the year, Mrs. Beaumont scrupled not to throw out assurances, in which she had herself no further faith. After what she had heard from her son this morning, she must have been convinced that there was no chance of marrying him to miss Hunter; she knew indeed positively, that he would soon declare his real attachment, but she could, she thought, during the interval, retain her power over miss Hunter, and secure her services, by concealing the truth.

"Before I say one word more of my own affairs, let me, my dearest child, assure you, that in the midst of all these disappointments and mortifications about Amelia, I am supported by the hope—by something more than the hope—that I shall see the daughter of my heart happily settled soon: Lightbody does not want penetration, I see. But I am not at liberty to say more. So now, my dear, help me with all your cleverness to consider what I shall do in the difficulties I am in at this moment. Your brother has a letter of mine, approving, and so forth, his addresses to my daughter; now if he, in the first rashness of his anger, should produce this to Palmer, I'm undone—or to my son, worse and worse! there would be a duel between them infallibly, for Beaumont is so warm on any point of honour—Oh, I dread to think of it, my dear!"

"So do I, I'm sure; but, Lord, I'm the worst person to think in a hurry—But can't you write a

letter? for you always know what to say so well— And after all, do you know, I don't think he'll be half so angry or *so disappointed* as you fancy, for I never thought he was so much in love with Amelia."

"Indeed!"

"I know, if it was not a secret, I could tell you——"

"What? No secrets between us, my darling child."

"Then I can tell you, that, just before he proposed for Amelia, he was consulting with me about proposing for Mrs. Dutton."

"Mrs. Dutton, the widow! Mrs. Dutton! How you astonish me!" said Mrs. Beaumont (though she knew this before). "Why she is older than I am."

"Older! yes, a great deal; but then you know my brother is no chicken himself."

"To be sure, compared with you, my dear, he is not young. There's a prodigious difference between you."

"Above twenty years; *for*, you know, he's by another marriage."

"True; but I can't believe he proposed for Mrs. Dutton."

"Not actually proposed, because I would not let him; for I should have hated to have had such an unfashionable-looking woman for my sister-in-law. I never could have borne to go into public with her, you know: so I plagued my brother out of it; and luckily he found out that her jointure is not half so great as it was said to be."

"I could have told him that. Mrs. Dutton's jointure is nothing nearly so large as mine was, even before the addition to it which my son so handsomely, and indeed unexpectedly, made to it this morning. And did I tell you, my dear? Mr. Palmer, this day, has been so kind as to leave me all his immense fortune

for my own life. But don't mention it, lest it should get round, and make ill-will: the Walsinghams know nothing of it. But to return to your poor brother—if I could any way serve him with Mrs. Dutton?"

"La! he'd never think of her more—and I'm sure I would not have him."

"You dear little saucy creature! indeed I cannot wonder that you don't like the thoughts of Mrs. Dutton for a *chaperon* in town."

"O, horrid! horrid!"

"And yet, would you condemn your poor brother to be an old bachelor, after this disappointment with Amelia?"

"La, ma'am, can't he marry any body but Mrs. Dutton?"

"I wish I could think of any person would suit him. Can you?"

"O, I know very well who I think would suit him, and one I like to go into public with of all things."

"Who?"

"And one who has promised to present me at court next winter."

"My dearest child! is it possible that you mean me?"

"I do;—and why not?"

"Why not! My sweet love, do you consider my age?"

"But you look so young."

"To be sure Mrs. Dutton looks older, and is older; but I could not bring myself, especially after being a widow so long, to think of marrying a young man—to be sure, your brother is not what one should call a very young man."

"Dear, no; you don't look above three, or four,

or five years older than he does ; and in public, and with dress, and rouge, and fashion, and all that, I think it would do vastly well, and nobody would think it odd at all. There's lady ****, is not she ten years older than lord ****? and every body says that's nothing, and that she gives the most delightful parties. O, I declare, dearest Mrs. Beaumont, you must and shall marry my brother, and that's the only way to make him amends, and prevent mischief between the gentlemen ; the only way to settle every thing charmingly—and I shall so like it—and I'm so proud of its being my plan ! I vow, I'll go and write to my brother this minute, and——”

“ Stay, you dear mad creature ; only consider what you are about.”

“ Consider ! I have considered, and I must and will have my own way,” said the dear mad creature, struggling with Mrs. Beaumont, who detained her with an earnest hand. “ My love,” said she, “ I positively cannot let you use my name in such a strange way. If your brother or the world should think I had any share in the transaction, it would be so indelicate.”

“ Indelicate ! Dear me, ma'am, but when nobody will know it, how can it be indelicate? and I will not mention your name, and nobody will ever imagine that you knew any thing of my writing ; and I shall manage it all my own way ; and the plan is all my own : so let me go and write this minute.”

“ Mercy upon me ! what shall I do with this dear headstrong creature !” said Mrs. Beaumont, letting miss Hunter go, as if exhausted by the struggle she had made to detain her impetuous young friend. Away ran miss Hunter, sometimes looking back in defiance and laughing, whilst Mrs. Beaumont shook her head at her whenever she looked back, but found

it impossible to overtake her, and vain to make further opposition. As Mrs. Beaumont walked slowly home-wards, she meditated her own epistle to sir John Hunter, and arranged her future plan of operations.

If, thought she, miss Hunter's letter should not succeed, it is only a suggestion of hers, of which I am not supposed to know any thing, and I am only just where I was before. If it does succeed, and if sir John transfers his addresses to me, I avoid all danger of his anger on account of his disappointment with Amelia; for it must then be his play, to convince me that he is not at all disappointed, and then I shall have leisure to consider whether I shall marry sir John or not. At all events, I can draw on his courtship as long as I please, till I have, by degrees, brought Mr. Palmer round to approve the match.

With these views Mrs. Beaumont wrote an incomparable letter to sir John Hunter, in which she enveloped her meaning in so many words, and so much sentiment, that it was scarcely possible to comprehend any thing, except, "that she should be glad to see sir John Hunter the next day, to explain to him a circumstance that had given her, on his account, heartfelt uneasiness." Miss Hunter's letter was carefully revised by Mrs. Beaumont, though she was to know nothing of it; and such was the art with which it was retouched, that, after all proper corrections, nothing appeared but the most childish and imprudent simplicity.

After having despatched these letters, Mrs. Beaumont felt much anxiety about the effect which they might produce; but she was doomed by her own habits of insincerity to have perpetually the irksome task of assuming an appearance contrary to her real feelings. Amelia was better, and Mr. Palmer's de-

termination to stay in England had spread a degree of cheerfulness over the whole family, which had not been felt for some time at Beaumont Park. In this general delight Mrs. Beaumont was compelled seemingly to sympathise: she performed her part so well, that even Dr. Wheeler and captain Lightbody, who had been behind the scenes, began to believe that the actress was in earnest. Amelia, alas! knew her mother too well to be the dupe even of her most consummate powers of acting. All that Mrs. Beaumont said about her joy, and her hopes that captain Walsingham would soon appear and confirm her happy *presentiments*, Amelia heard without daring to believe. She had such an opinion of her mother's address, such a sublime superstitious dread that her mother would, by some inscrutable means, work out her own purposes, that she felt as if she could not escape from these secret machinations. Amelia still apprehended that sir John Hunter would not be irrevocably dismissed, and that by some turn of artifice she should find herself bound to him. The next morning sir John Hunter, however, finally relieved her from these apprehensions. After having been closeted for upwards of two hours with Mrs. Beaumont, he begged to speak to miss Beaumont; and he resigned all pretensions to the honour which he had so long and so ardently aspired to. It was his pride to show that his spirits were not affected by this disappointment: he scarcely indeed exhibited that decent appearance of mortification which is usually expected on such an occasion; but with provoking haughtiness professed himself sincerely obliged to miss Beaumont for having, *however late in the business*, prevented him, by her candour, from the danger of crossing her inclinations. For this he could scarcely be sufficiently thankful, when he con-

sidered how every day showed the consequences of marrying young ladies whose affections were previously engaged. He had only to add, that he hoped the world would see *the thing* in the same light in which he took it, and that miss Beaumont might not find herself blamed for breaking off *the matter*, after it had been so publicly reported : that, for his part, he assured her, he would, as far as he was concerned, do his utmost to silence unpleasant observations ; and that, as the most effectual means to do this, he conceived, would be to show that he continued on an amicable footing with the family, he should do himself the honour to avail himself of the permission—invitation, indeed—he had just received from Mrs. Beaumont, to continue his visits as usual at Beaumont Park.

To this Amelia could make no objection after the express declaration which he had just made, that he renounced all pretensions to her favour. However keenly she felt the implied reproach of having encouraged sir John as her admirer, while her affections were previously engaged, and of having shown candour *late* in this affair, she could not vindicate herself without accusing her mother ; therefore she attempted neither excuse nor apology, submitted to let the unfeeling baronet enjoy her confusion, whilst she said, in general terms, she felt obliged by his assurance that she should not be the cause of any quarrel between two families who had hitherto lived in friendship.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Him no soft thoughts, no gratitude could move ;
To gold he fled, from beauty and from love ! ”

DRYDEN.

ALL that passed in the two hours' conversation between the discarded baronet and the mother of his late mistress did not transpire ; but Mrs. Beaumont said that she had taken infinite pains to reconcile sir John to his fate, and his subsequent behaviour showed that she had succeeded. His attention towards her also plainly proved that he was not dissatisfied by the part she had acted, or rather by the part that he thought she had acted. Thus all things went on smoothly. Mrs. Beaumont, in confidence, told her friend, miss Hunter, that sir John had behaved with the greatest propriety and candour (candour ! that hackneyed word), that he had acknowledged that his principal inducement to propose for her daughter had been a desire to be connected with a family for which he had such peculiar regard.

“ This, my love,” continued Mrs. Beaumont, “ was all, you know, that your brother could, with propriety, say on such an occasion ; all indeed that I would permit him to say. As to the rest, on Amelia's account, you know, I could not refuse his request to continue his visits in this family on the same footing of friendship as usual.”

Whether this was the truth and the whole truth, the mystery that involves all cabinet-councils, and more especially those of female politicians, prevents the cautious historian from presuming to decide. But

arguing from general causes, and from the established characters and ruling passions of the parties concerned, we may safely conjecture that the baronet did not at this time make any decisive proposal to the lady, but that he kept himself at liberty to advance or recede, as circumstances should render it expedient. His ruling passion was avarice; and though he had been allured by the hints which his sister had thrown out concerning Mrs. Beaumont's increased jointure, and vast expectancies from Mr. Palmer, yet he was not so rash as to act decisively upon such vague information: he had wisely determined to obtain accurate and positive evidence from captain Lightbody, who seemed, in this case, to be the common vouchee; but Lightbody happened to be gone out to shoot *flappers* *. Consequently sir John wisely entrenched himself in general professions of regard to Mrs. Beaumont, and reflections on the happiness of being connected with such a respectable family. Mrs. Beaumont, who understood the whole of the game, now saw that her play must be to take captain Lightbody again into her confidence.

Ever careful not to commit herself, she employed miss Hunter to communicate *her own scheme* to the captain, and to prepare him on the requisite points with proper answers to those inquiries which she foresaw the baronet would make.

"You know, my love," said Mrs. Beaumont, "you can find a proper moment to say all you wish to Lightbody."

"O, yes," said miss Hunter, "I will if I possibly can this day; but it is so difficult to find a good time——"

* Young wild ducks.

"At dinner, suppose?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

"At dinner! surely, ma'am, that's an awkward time, is not it, for talking of secrets?"

"The best time in the world, my dear; you know we are to have the Duttons, and the Lord knows whom besides, to-day. And when there's a large company, and every body talking at once, and eating, and drinking, and carving, it is the best time in the world! You may say what you please; your neighbours are all happily engaged, too busy to mind you. Get near fat Mr. Dutton, and behind the screen of his prodigious elbow, you will be comfortably recessed from curious impertinents. My dear, the most perfect solitude is not so convenient as one of these great dinners."

Whilst Mrs. Beaumont was demonstrating to miss Hunter that the most convenient and secure time for a *tête-à-tête* is at a large dinner, she happened to look out of the window, near which they were standing, and she saw her son and daughter with Mr. Palmer walking in the park; they sat down under a tree within view of the house.

"Come away from the window, my dear," said Mrs. Beaumont; "they will observe us, and perhaps think we are plotting something. I wonder what they are talking of? Look how earnestly Amelia is stretching out her neck, and Mr. Palmer striking his cane upon the ground. Come back a little, my dear, come back; you can see as well here."

"But I see a gentleman on horseback, galloping. O, ma'am, look! he has stopped, jumped off his horse! At Amelia's feet! Captain Walsingham, it must be!"

"Captain Walsingham it really is!" said Mrs. Beaumont, pressing forward to look out of the win-

dow, yet standing so, that she could not be seen from without.

"Dear," said miss Hunter, "but how delighted Mr. Beaumont seems; and how Mr. Palmer shakes captain Walsingham's hand, as if he had known him these hundred years! What can make them so glad to see him? Do look at them, ma'am."

"I see it all!" said Mrs. Beaumont, with an involuntary sigh.

"But, dear Mrs. Beaumont," pursued miss Hunter, "if he has actually come at last to propose for Amelia, don't you think he is doing it in a shabby sort of way? When he has been in London too—and if he has taken such a treasure too, could not he have come down here a little more in style, with some sort of an equipage of his own at least? But now only look at him; would you, if you met him on the road, know him from any common man?"

Another sigh, deep and sincere, was all the answer Mrs. Beaumont made.

"I am sure," continued miss Hunter, as Mrs. Beaumont drew her away from the window, "I am sure, I think Amelia has not gained much by the change of admirers, for what's a captain of a ship?"

"He ranks with a colonel in the army, to be sure," said Mrs. Beaumont; "but Amelia might have looked much higher. If she does not know her own interest and dignity, that is not my fault."

"If she had such a fortune as I shall have," said miss Hunter, "she might afford to marry for love, because you know she could make her husband afterwards keep her proper equipages, and take her to town, and go into parliament, and get a title for her too!"

"Very true, my darling," said Mrs. Beaumont,

who was at this instant so absent, that she assented without having heard one syllable that her darling said.

“ But for Amelia, who has no such great fortune of her own, it is quite another thing, you know, dearest Mrs. Beaumont. O, you’ll see how she’ll repent when she sees you lady Puckeridge, and herself plain Mrs. Walsingham. And when she sees the figure you’ll make in town next winter, and the style my brother will live in—O, then she’ll see what a difference there is between sir John Hunter and captain Walsingham !”

“ Very true, indeed, my dear,” said Mrs. Beaumont; and this time she did not answer without having heard the assertion. The door opened.

“ Captain Walsingham ! dare I believe my eyes ? And do I see our friend, captain Walsingham, again at last ?”

“ At last ! O, Mrs. Beaumont, you don’t know how hard I have worked to get here.”

“ How kind ! But won’t you sit down and tell me ?”

“ No ; I can neither sit, nor rest, nor speak, nor think upon any subject but one,” said captain Walsingham.

“ That’s right,” cried Mr. Palmer.

“ Mrs. Beaumont—pardon my abruptness,” continued captain Walsingham, “ but you see before you a man whose whole happiness is at stake. May I beg a few minutes’ conversation with you ?”

“ This instant,” said Mrs. Beaumont, hesitating ; but she saw that Mr. Palmer’s eye was upon her, so with a smile she complied immediately ; and giving her hand graciously to captain Walsingham, she ac-

accompanied him into a little reading-room within the drawing-room.

"May I hope that we are friends?" said captain Walsingham, as he led Mrs. Beaumont into another room: "May I hope so, Mrs. Beaumont—may I?"

"Good Heavens! Friends! assuredly; I hope so. I have always had and expressed the highest opinion of you, captain Walsingham."

"I have had one, and, hitherto, but one opportunity of showing myself, in any degree, deserving of your esteem, madam," said captain Walsingham. "When I was in this country some years ago, you must have seen how passionately I was in love with your daughter; but I knew that my circumstances were then such that I could not hope to obtain miss Beaumont's hand; and you will do me the justice to allow that I behaved with prudence. Of the difficulty of the task I alone can judge."

Mrs. Beaumont declared, that she admired captain Walsingham's conduct inexpressibly, now that she understood what his feelings and motives had been; but really he had kept his own secret so honourably, that she had not, till within these few days, when it was *let out* by Mr. Walsingham to Mr. Palmer, had the most distant idea of his being attached to her daughter.

Captain Walsingham was too polite even to *look* a doubt of the truth of a lady's assertion; he therefore believed, because it was impossible.

Mrs. Beaumont, determining to make her story consistent, repeated nearly what she had said to Mr. Palmer, and went on to confess that she had often, with a mother's pride, perhaps, in her own secret thoughts, wondered at the indifference captain Walsingham showed towards Amelia.

Captain Walsingham was surprised that Mrs. Beaumont's penetration should have been so strangely mistaken; especially as the symptoms of admiration and love must be so well known to a lady who had so many and such passionate admirers.

Mrs. Beaumont smiled, and observed, that captain Walsingham, though a seaman, had all the address of a courtier, and she acknowledged that she loved address.

"If by address Mrs. Beaumont means politeness, I admire it as much as she does; but I disclaim and despise all that paltry system of artifice, which is sometimes called address. No person of a great mind ever condescends to use *address* in that sense of the word; not because they cannot, but because they will not."

"Certainly—certainly," said Mrs. Beaumont, "there is nothing I love so much as frankness."

"Then, frankly, Mrs. Beaumont, may I hope for your approbation in addressing miss Beaumont?"

"Frankly, then, you have my full approbation. This is the very thing I have long secretly wished, as Mr. Palmer can tell you. You have ever been the son-in-law of my choice, though not of my hopes."

Delighted with this frank answer, this full approbation, this assurance that he had always been the son-in-law of her choice, captain Walsingham poured out his warm heart in joy and gratitude. All suspicions of Mrs. Beaumont were forgotten; for suspicion was unnatural to his mind: though he knew, though he had experience almost from childhood, of her character, yet, at this instant, he thought he had, till now, been always prejudiced, always mistaken. Happy those who can be thus duped by the warmth of their own hearts! It is a happiness

which they who smile in scorn at their credulity can never enjoy.

Wakening a little to the use of his understanding, captain Walsingham disconcerted Mrs. Beaumont, by suddenly saying, "Then there was not any truth in the report, which I have heard with horror, that you were going to marry miss Beaumont to sir John Hunter?"

"Then there was not any truth in the report I heard with horror, that you were going to marry yourself to a Spanish nun?" said Mrs. Beaumont, who had learned from a veteran in public warfare, that the best way to parry an attack is not to defend, but to make an assault.

"My dear captain Walsingham," added she, with an arch smile, "I really thought you were a man of too much sense, and, above all, too much courage, to be terror-struck by every idle report. You should leave such *horrors* to us weak women—to the visionary maid. Now, I could not blame poor Amelia, if she were to ask, 'Then was there no truth in the report of the Spanish incognita?'—No, no," pursued Mrs. Beaumont, playfully, refusing to hear captain Walsingham; "not to me, not to *me*, must your defence be made. Appear before your judge, appear before Amelia; I can only recommend you to mercy."

What a charming woman this Mrs. Beaumont would be, if one could feel quite sure of her sincerity, thought captain Walsingham, as he followed the lady, who, with apparently playful, but really politic grace, thus eluded all further inquiry into her secret manoeuvres.

"Here, my dearest Amelia," cried she, "is a culprit, whom I am bringing to your august tribunal for mercy."

"For justice," said captain Walsingham.

"Justice! O, the pride of the man's heart, and the folly! Who ever talks of justice to a woman? My dear captain, talk of mercy, or cruelty, if you will; we ladies delight in being called cruel, you know, and sometimes are even pleased to be merciful—but to be just! is the last thing we think of: so now for your trial; public or private, captain Walsingham?"

"Public! as I am innocent."

"Oyes! Oyes! all manner of men," cried Mr. Beaumont.

"The Spanish cause coming on!" cried Mr. Palmer: "let me hear it; and let me have a good seat that I may hear—a seat near the judge."

"O, you shall be judge, Mr. Palmer," said Amelia; "and here is the best seat for our good judge."

"And you will remember," said Mr. Beaumont, "that it is the duty of a good judge to lean towards the prisoner."

"To lean! No, to sit bolt upright, as I will if I can," said old Mr. Palmer, entering into the pleasantry of the young people as readily as if he had been the youngest man in company. As he looked round, his good countenance beamed with benevolent pleasure.

"Now, sir captain, be pleased to inform the court what you have done, or mean to do, with a certain Spanish nun, whom, as it is confidently asserted in a letter from one of your own men, you carried off from her nunnery, and did bring, or cause to be brought, with you to England."

"My lord judge, will you do me the favour, or the justice, to order that the letter alluded to may be read in court?"

This was ordered, and done accordingly.

“My lord judge,” said captain Walsingham, “I have nothing to object to the truth of the main points of this story; and considering that it was told by a very young man, and a traveller, it contains but a reasonable share of ‘*travellers’ wonders*.’ Considering the opportunity and temptation for embellishments afforded by such a romantic tale, less has been added to it by the narrator than the usual progress of strange reports might have prepared me to expect. It is most true, as it has been stated, that I did, by her own desire, carry away from a nunnery, at *****, this lady, who was neither a nun nor a Spanish lady, nor, as I am compelled by my regard to truth to add, young, nor yet handsome. My lord judge, far be it from me to impeach the veracity of the letter-writer. It is admitted by the highest and the lowest authorities, that beauty is a matter of taste, and that for taste there is no standard; it is also notorious, that to a sailor every woman is fair and young, who is not as old as Hecuba, or as ugly as Caifacaratadaddera. I can therefore speak only to my own opinion and judgment. And really, my lord, it grieves me much to spoil the romance, to destroy the effect of a tale, which might in future serve for the foundation of some novel, over which belles and beaux, yet unborn, might weep and wonder: it grieves me much, I say, to be compelled by the severity of this cross-examination to declare the simple truth, that there was no love in the case; that, to the very best of my belief and judgment, the lady was not in love with any body, much less with me.”

“As you have admitted, sir,” said the judge, “as you have voluntarily stated, that to a sailor every woman is fair and young, who is not as old as He-

cuba, or as ugly as that other woman with the unspeakable name, you will be pleased to inform the court how it happened, or how it was possible, that in the course of a long voyage, you could avoid falling in love with the damsel whom you had thus rescued and carried off. Experience shows us, sir, that at land, and, I presume, at sea, proximity is one of the most common causes of love. Now, I understand, she was the only woman you saw for some months; and she had, I think you allow, possession of your cabin, to and from which you had of course constant egress and regress. Sir, human nature is human nature; here is temptation, and opportunity, and circumstantial evidence enough, in our days, to hang a man. What have you to offer in your defence, young man?"

"The plain fact, my lord, is, that instead of three months, I was but three days, in the dangerous state of proximity with the Spanish lady. But had it been three months, or three years, there is my defence, my lord," said captain Walsingham, bowing to Amelia. "At the first *blush*, you allow it, I see, to be powerful; but how powerful, you cannot feel as I do, without having looked, as I have done, into the mind."

"I have looked into the mind as well as you, sir. You have a great deal of assurance, to tell me I cannot feel and judge as well as you can. But, nevertheless, I shall do you justice. I think your defence is sufficient. I believe we must acquit him. But, pray—the plain matter of fact, which I wanted to hear, I have not yet got at. What have you done with this lady? and where is she?"

"She was carried safely to her friends—to her friend, for she has but one friend, as I could find out,

an old aunt, who lives in an obscure lodging, in a narrow street, in London."

"And, upon honour, this is all you know about her?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

"All—except that she is in hopes of recovering some property, of which she says she has been unjustly defrauded by some of her relations. After I had paid my respects at the Admiralty, I made it my business to see the lady, and to offer my services; but into her lawsuits, I thank God, it was not my business to inquire. I recommended to her a good honest lawyer, and came here as fast as horses could carry me."

"But was not there some giving of diamonds, and exchanging of rings, one day, upon deck?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

"None," said captain Walsingham; "that was a mere fable of poor Birch's imagination. I recollect the lady showed me a Spanish motto upon her ring; that is all I can remember about rings.—She had no diamonds, and very few clothes. Now," cried captain Walsingham, growing a little impatient of the length of his trial, for he had not yet been able to speak for more than an instant to Amelia, "now, I hope, my trial is ended; else its length will be, as in some other cases, the worst of punishments."

"Acquitted! Acquitted! honourably acquitted!" said Mr. Palmer.

"Acquitted, acquitted, honourably acquitted by general acclamation," cried Mr. Beaumont.

"Acquitted by a smile from Amelia, worth all our acclamations," said Mrs. Beaumont.

"Captain Walsingham," said miss Hunter, "did the lady come to England and go to London in a Spanish dress and long waist?"

She spoke, but captain Walsingham did not hear her important question. She turned to repeat her question, but the captain was gone, and Amelia with him.

" Bless me ! how quick ! how odd ! " said miss Hunter, with a pouting look, which seemed to add—nobody carries me off !

Mr. Beaumont looked duller than was becoming.

Mrs. Beaumont applied herself to adjust the pretty curls of miss Hunter's hair ; and Mr. Palmer, in one of his absent fits, hummed aloud, as he walked up and down the room,

" ' And it's, Oh ! what will become of me ?

Oh ! what shall I do ?

Nobody coming to marry me,

Nobody coming to woo.' "

CHAPTER XV.

" True love's the gift which God has giv'n
To man alone, beneath the heav'n ;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind."

HAPPY love, though the most delightful in reality, is the most uninteresting in description ; and lovers are proverbially bad company, except for one another : therefore we shall not intrude on captain Walsingham and Amelia, nor shall we give a journal of the days of courtship ; those days which, by Rousseau, and many people, have been pronounced to be the hap-

piest ; by others, the only happy days of existence ; and which, by some privileged or prudent few, have been found to be but the prelude to the increasing pleasures of domestic union.

Now that Mr. Beaumont saw his sister and his friend thus gratified in their mutual esteem and affection, now that he saw all obstacles to their union removed, he became uncontrollably impatient to declare his own attachment to miss Walsingham.

“ My dear mother, I can bear it no longer. Believe me, you are mistaken in the whole romance you have imagined to yourself about miss Hunter. She is no more in love with me than I am with her. Since you fixed my attention upon her, I have studied the young lady. She is not capable of love : I don’t mean that she is not capable of wishing to be married, but that is quite a different affair, which need not give me any peculiar disturbance. My dear mother, find another husband for her, and my life for it, her heart will not break ; especially if you give her bales of wedding finery enough to think and talk about for a calendar year.”

“ You abominably malicious monster of cruelty, I will not smile, nor will I allow you to indulge your humour in this manner, at the expense of your poor victim.”

“ Victim ! Never saw a girl look less like a victim, except, indeed, as to her ornaments. I believe it is the etiquette for victims to appear dressed out with garlands, and ribands, and flowers.”

“ Positively, Beaumont, I won’t allow you to go on in this style ;—do you know you seriously hurt and offend me ? do you consider that miss Hunter’s mother was my most intimate friend, and this match

I have anxiously wished, in consequence of an agreement made between us at your birth and Albina's?"

"O, ma'am, those agreements never turned out well, from the time of the Arabian tales to the present moment. And you must pardon me if, after having tried all that reason and patience would do, in vain, I now come to impatience, and a little innocent ridicule. Except by laughing, I have no other way left of convincing you that I never can or will marry this young lady."

"But so pretty a creature! Surely you *have thought* her pretty."

"Extremely pretty. And I acknowledge that there have been moments when the influence of her—beauty, I can't call it—prettiness, joined to the power of my mother's irresistible address, have almost lapped me in elysium—a fool's paradise. But, thank Heaven and miss Walsingham! I unlapped himself; and though the sweet airs took my fancy, they never imprisoned my soul."

"Vastly poetical! quite in the blue-stockings style."

"Blue-stockings! Dear mother, that expression is not elegant enough for you. That commonplace taunt is unworthy of my mother," said Mr. Beaumont, warmly, for he was thrown off his guard by the reflection implied on miss Walsingham. "Ignorant silly women may be allowed to sneer at information and talents in their own sex, and, if they have read them, may talk of '*Les Précieuses Ridicules*,' and '*Les Femmes Savantes*,' and may borrow from Moliere all the wit they want, to support the cause of folly. But from women who are themselves

distinguished for talents, such apostasy—but I am speaking to my mother—I forbear.”

“Great forbearance to your mother you have shown, in truth,” cried Mrs. Beaumont, reddening with genuine anger: “Marry as you please! I have done. Fool that I have been, to devote my life to plans for the happiness and aggrandisement of my children! It is now time I should think of myself. You shall not see me the defeated, deserted, duped, despised mother—the old dowager *permitted* in the house of which she was once the mistress! No, no, Mr. Beaumont,” cried she, rising indignantly, “this shall never, never be.”

Touched and astonished by a burst of passion, such as he scarcely had ever before seen from his mother, Mr. Beaumont stopped her as she rose; and taking her hand in the most affectionate manner, “Forgive me, my dear mother, the hasty words I said just now. I was very much in the wrong. I beg your pardon. Forgive your son.”

Mrs. Beaumont struggled to withdraw the hand which her son forcibly detained.

“Be always,” continued he, “be always mistress of this house, of me, and mine. The chosen wife of my heart will never torment you, or degrade herself with paltry struggles for power. Your days shall be happy and honoured: believe me, I speak from my heart.”

Mrs. Beaumont looked as if her anger had subsided; yet, as if struggling with unusual feelings, she sat silent. Mr. Beaumont continued, “Your son—who is no sentimentalist, no speech-maker—your son, who has hitherto perhaps been too rough, too harsh—now implores you, by these sincere caresses, by all that is tender and true in nature, to believe in the

filial affection of your children. Give us, simply give us your confidence ; and our confidence, free and unconstrained, shall be given in return. Then, we shall be happy indeed !”

Touched, vanquished, Mrs. Beaumont leaned her head on her son, and said, “ Then we shall be happy indeed !” The exclamation was sincere. At this moment she thought as she spoke. All her schemes were forgotten. The reversionary title, the Wigram estate—all, all forgotten :—miraculous eloquence and power of truth !

“ What happiness !” said Mrs. Beaumont : “ I ask no other. You are right, my dear son ; marry miss Walsingham—and we have enough, and more than enough, for happiness. You are right—and henceforward we shall have but one mind amongst us.”

With true gratitude and joy her son embraced her : and this was the most delightful, perhaps the only really delightful moment she had felt for years. She was sincere, and at ease. But this touch of nature, strong as it was, operated only for a moment. Habit resumed her influence ; Art regained her pupil and her slave !—Captain Lightbody and miss Hunter came into the room ; and with them came low thoughts of plots, and notes, and baronets, and equipages, and a reversionary title, and the Wigram estate. What different ideas of happiness ! Her son, in the mean time, had started up, mounted his horse, and had galloped off to realise some of his ideas of felicity, by the immediate offer of his hand to the lady who possessed his whole heart. Cool as policy, just recovered from the danger of imprudent sensibility, could make her, Mrs. Beaumont was now all herself again.

"Have you found much amusement shooting this morning, Lightbody?" said she, carelessly.

"No, ma'am; done nothing—just nothing at all—for I met sir John in the grounds, and could not leave him. Poor sir John, ma'am; I tell him we must get him a crook; he is quite turned despairing shepherd. Never saw a man so changed. Upon my soul, he is—seriously now, Mrs. Beaumont, you need not laugh—I always told sir John that his time for falling in love would come; and come it has at last, with a vengeance."

"O nonsense! nonsense, Lightbody! This to me! and of sir John Hunter!"

Though Mrs. Beaumont called it, and thought it nonsense, yet it flattered her; and though she appeared half offended by flattery so gross, as to seem almost an insult upon her understanding, yet her vanity was secretly gratified, even by feeling that she had dependents who were thus obliged to flatter; and though she despised captain Lightbody for the meanness, yet he made his court to her successfully, by persisting in all the audacity of adulation. She knew sir John Hunter too well to believe that he was liable to fall in love with any thing but a fair estate or a fine fortune; yet she was gratified by feeling that she possessed so great a share of those charms which age cannot wither; of that substantial power, to which men do not merely feign in poetical sport to submit, or to which they are slaves only for a honey-moon, but to which they do homage to the latest hour of life, with unabating, with increasing devotion. Beside this sense of pleasure arising from calculation, it may be presumed that, like all other female politicians, our heroine had something of the

woman lurking at her heart ; something of that feminine vanity, which inclines to believe in the potency of personal charms, even when they are in the wane. Captain Lightbody's asseverations, and the notes sir John Hunter wrote to his sister, were at last listened to by Mrs. Beaumont with patience, and even with smiles : and, after it had been sufficiently reiterated, that really it was using sir John Hunter ill not to give him some more decisive answer, when he was so unhappy, so impatient, she at length exclaimed, " Well, Lightbody, tell your friend sir John then, since it must be so, I will consult my friends, and see what can be done for him."

" When may I say ? for I dare not see sir John again, positively I dare not meet him, without having some hope to give—something decisive. He says the next time he comes here he must be allowed to make it known to the family, that he is Mrs. Beaumont's admirer. So when may I say ?"

" O, dearest Mrs. Beaumont," cried miss Hunter, " say to-morrow."

" To-morrow ! impossible !"

" But when ?" said miss Hunter : " only look at my brother's note to me again ; you see he is afraid of being cast off at last as he was before about Amelia, if Mr. Palmer should object. And he says this disappointment would be such a very different affair."

" Indeed," said captain Lightbody, " I, who am in sir John's confidence, can vouch for that ; for I have reason to believe, that—that *the connexion* was the charm, and that the daughter would not have been thought of. Stop, I was charged not to say this. But *when*, Mrs. Beaumont, to return to my point——"

" O name an early day," cried miss Hunter, in

a fondling tone ; “ name an early day for my brother’s coming ; and then you know it will be so *nice* to have the wedding days fixed for both marriages. And, dearest Mrs. Beaumont, remember I am to be your bride’s-maid—and we’ll have a magnificent wedding—and I shall be bride’s-maid !”

“ The dear innocent little creature, how mad she is with spirits ! Well, you shall be my bride’s-maid, if the thing takes place.”

“ *If!*—*If* to the winds !—Captain Lightbody, tell my brother—No, I’ll write myself, and tell him he may come.”

“ How she distresses me ! But she is so affectionate, one does not know how to be angry with her. But, my dear, as to naming the day when he may publicly declare himself, I cannot ; for, you know, I have to break the affair to Mr. Palmer, and to my son and daughter, and I must take my own time, and find a happy moment for this ; so, name a day I cannot : but in general, and it’s always safest to use general terms, you may say, *soon*.”

This was Mrs. Beaumont’s ultimatum. The note was written accordingly, and committed to the care of the confidential captain.

This business of mysterious note-writing, and secret negotiations*, was peculiarly suited to our

* *Note by the Editor.*—It is much to be regretted that the original papers belonging to this correspondence, including all the notes and letters, which Mrs. Beaumont either wrote herself, or those still more important, which she caused to be written by her confidential amanuensis, which would, doubtless, form all together a body of *domestic diplomacy, equally curious and useful*, are irrecoverably lost to the world. After the most diligent search, the Editor is compelled to rest under the persuasion that they

heroine's genius and taste. Considering the negotiation to be now in effect brought within view of a happy termination, her ambassador, furnished with her ultimatum, having now actually set out on his ostensible mission of duck-shooting, our fair negotiatrix prepared to show the usual degree of gratitude towards those who had been the principal instruments of her success. The proper time she thought was now arrived, when, having no further occasion for miss Hunter's services, she might finally undeceive her young friend as to any hopes she might retain of a union with Mr. Beaumont; and she felt that it was now indispensably necessary to disclose the truth, that her son had declared his attachment to miss Walsingham.

Mrs. Beaumont opened the delicate case with a sigh, which claimed the notice of her young confidante.

"What a deep sigh!" said miss Hunter, who was perfect, to use a musical term, in her lessons, *pour observer les soupirs*: "What a sigh! I hope it was for my poor brother?"

"Ah, no, my love! for one nearer my heart—for you."

"For me!—dear me!"

"You see before you a mother, all of whose fondest wishes and plans are doomed to be frustrated by her children. Amelia would have her way—I was forced to yield. My son follows her example, insists upon marrying without fortune, or extraordinary beauty, or any of the advantages which I had fondly pointed

must all have been collected and committed to the flames by the too great prudence of the principal party concerned. Had they been trusted to the discretion of a *friend*, the public would, doubtless, long since have been favoured with the whole.

out in the daughter-in-law of my heart. You turn away from me, my darling! How shall I go on—how shall I tell you all the terrible truth?”

“O ma’am, pray go on; pray tell me all.”

“Miss Walsingham—that’s all, in one word. These Walsinghams have forced themselves into my family—fairly outwitted me. I cannot tell you how much—how deeply I am mortified!”

“Thank Heaven! I am not mortified,” cried miss Hunter, throwing back her head with pettish disdain.

Mrs. Beaumont, who had prepared herself for a fainting fit, or at least for a flood of tears, rejoiced to see this turn of the young lady’s temper.

“That’s right, my own love. How I admire your spirit! This pride becomes you, and is what I expected from your understanding. Set a just value upon yourself, and show it.”

“I should set but little value on myself, indeed, if I did not think myself equal to miss Walsingham. But Mr. Beaumont knows best.”

“Not best, I fear,” said Mrs. Beaumont; “but, from a child, he was ever the most self-willed, uncontrollable being; there was no moving, no persuading him; there was no power, no appeal, my love, I did not try.”

“Dear ma’am, I am excessively sorry you did.”

“Why, my dear, I could not refrain from doing all I could, not only for my son’s sake, but for yours, when I saw your affections, as I feared, so deeply engaged. But your present magnanimity gives me hopes that the shock will not be irrecoverable.”

“Irrecoverable! No, really, ma’am. If Mr. Beaumont expects to see me wear the willow for him all my life, his vanity will be mistaken.”

“Certainly, my dear,” replied Mrs. Beaumont, “you would not be so weak as to wear the willow for any man. A young lady of your fortune should never wear the weeping but the golden willow. Turn your pretty little face again towards me, and smile once more upon me.”

Miss Hunter had sat with her face turned from Mrs. Beaumont, during the whole of this dialogue—“as if by hiding her face, she could conceal the emotions of her mind from me,” thought her penetrating observer.

“Spare me, spare me, dearest Mrs. Beaumont,” cried miss Hunter, hiding her face on the arm of the sofa, and seeming now disposed to pass from the heights of anger to the depths of despair.

Mrs. Beaumont, less hard-hearted than some politicians, who care not who dies or lives, provided they attain their own objects, now listened at least with seeming commiseration to her young friend, who, with intermitting sighs, and in a voice which her position or her sobs rendered scarcely audible, talked of dying, and of never marrying any other man upon earth.

Not much alarmed, however, by the dying words of young ladies, Mrs. Beaumont confined her attention to the absurdity of the resolution against marriage in general, and at this instant formed a plan of marrying miss Hunter to one of her nephews instead of her son. She had one unmarried nephew, a young man of good figure and agreeable manners, but with only a younger brother's portion. To him she thought miss Hunter's large fortune would be highly convenient; and she had reason to believe that his taste in the choice of a wife would be easily governed by her advice or by his interest. Thus she could, at least, prevent her young friend's affections

and fortune from going out of the family. In consequence of this glimpse of a new scheme, our indefatigable politician applied herself to prepare the way for it with her wonted skill. She soothed the lovelorn and pettish damsel with every expression that could gratify pride and rouse high thoughts of revenge. She suggested, that instead of making rash vows of celibacy, which would only show forlorn constancy, miss Hunter should abide by her first spirited declaration, never to wear the willow for any man; and that the best way to assert her own dignity would be to marry as soon as possible. After having given this consolatory advice, Mrs. Beaumont left the young lady's grief to wear itself out. "I know, my love," added she, "a friend of mine who would die for the happiness which my obstinate son does not, it seems, know how to value."

"Who, ma'am?" said miss Hunter, raising her head: "I'm sure I can't guess whom you can possibly mean—who, ma'am?"

"Ah! my dear, excuse me," said Mrs. Beaumont; "that is a secret I cannot tell you yet. When you are 'fit to hear yourself convinced,' may be, I may obtain leave to tell you your admirer's name. I can assure you, he's a very fashionable and a very agreeable man; a great favourite with our sex, a particular friend of mine, and an officer."

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed miss Hunter, starting quite up, "an officer! I can't imagine whom you mean! Dear Mrs. Beaumont, whom can you mean?"

Mrs. Beaumont walked towards the door.

"Only tell me one thing, dearest Mrs. Beaumont—did I ever see him?"

Mrs. Beaumont, wisely declining to answer any

more questions at present, quitted the room, and left miss Hunter dying—with curiosity.

The new delight of this fresh project, with the prospect of bringing to a happy termination her negotiation with sir John Hunter, sustained Mrs. Beaumont's spirits in the midst of the disappointments she experienced respecting the marriages of her son and daughter; and enabled her, with less effort of dissimulation, to take apparently a share in the general joy which now pervaded her family. Her son expressed his felicity with unbounded rapture, when he found his proposal to miss Walsingham graciously received by the object of his affections, and by all her family: his gratitude to his mother for no longer opposing his wishes gave a tenderness to his manner which would have touched any heart but that of a politician. Amelia, also, even in the midst of her love for captain Walsingham, was anxiously intent upon showing dutiful attention to her mother, and upon making her some amends for the pain she had caused her of late. Whenever the brother and sister were together, in all their views of future happiness their mother was one of their principal objects; and these dispositions both miss Walsingham and captain Walsingham were earnest to confirm. No young people could have higher ideas than they had of the duty of children towards parents, and of the delight of family confidence and union. In former times, when Mr. Beaumont had been somewhat to blame in the roughness of his sincerity towards his mother, and when he had been disposed to break from her artful restraints, captain Walsingham, by his conversation, and by his letters, had always used his power and influence to keep him within bounds; and whenever he could do so with truth, to raise

Mrs. Beaumont in his opinion. She now appeared in a more advantageous light to her family, and they were more disposed to believe in her sincerity than they had ever been since the credulous days of childhood. The days of love and childhood are perhaps, in good minds, almost equally credulous, or, at least, confiding. Even Mr. Walsingham was won over by the pleasure he felt in the prospect of his daughter's happiness; and good Mr. Palmer was ten times more attentive than ever to madam Beaumont. In his attention, however, there was something more ceremonious than formerly; it was evident, for he was too honest to conceal his feelings, that his opinion of her was changed, and that his attention was paid to her rather as the widow of his old friend than on her own account. Amelia, who particularly remarked this change, and who feared that it must be severely painful to her mother, tried by every honest art of kindness to reinstate her in his regard. Amelia, however, succeeded only in raising herself in his esteem.

"Do not disturb yourself, my dear young lady," said he to her, one day, "about your mother and me. Things are on their right footing between us, and can never be on any other. She, you see, is quite satisfied."

Mrs. Beaumont, indeed, had not Amelia's quick sensibility with regard to the real affections of her friends, though she was awake to every external mark of attention. She was content, as Mr. Palmer before others always treated her with marked deference, and gave her no reason to apprehend any alteration in his testamentary dispositions. When settlements were talked of for the intended marriages, Palmer seemed to consider Mrs. Beaumont first

in all their consultations, appealed for her opinion, and had ever a most cautious eye upon her interests. This she observed with satisfaction, and she was gratified by the demonstrations of increased regard from her son and daughter, because she thought it would facilitate her projects. She wished that her marriage with sir John Hunter should appear well to the world; and for this reason she desired that it should *seem* to be liked by all her family—seem, for as to their real opinions she was indifferent.

Things were in this situation, when Mrs. Beaumont *caused herself to be surprised** one morning by Mr. Palmer, with a letter in her hand, deep in reverie.

“O, my dear Mr. Palmer, is it you?” cried she, starting very naturally: “I was really so lost in thought——”

Mr. Palmer hoped that he did not disturb her.—“Disturb me! no, my good friend, you are the very person I wished to consult.” Her eye glanced again and again upon the letter she held in her hand, but Mr. Palmer seemed provokingly destitute of curiosity; he however took a chair, and his snuff-box, and with a polite but cold manner said he was much honoured by her consulting him, but that of course his judgment could be of little service to a lady of Mrs. Beaumont’s understanding.

“Understanding! Ah,” said she, “there are cases where understanding is of no use to women, but quite the contrary.”

Mr. Palmer did not contradict the assertion, nor did he assent to it, but waited, with a pinch of snuff arrested in its way, to have the cases specified.

* See Bacon on Cunning.

"In love affairs, for instance, we poor women," said Mrs. Beaumont, looking down prettily; but Mr. Palmer affording no assistance to her bashful hesitation, she was under the necessity of finishing her sentence, or of beginning another, upon a different construction. The latter was most convenient, and she took a new and franker tone:—"Here's a letter from poor sir John Hunter."

Mr. Palmer still sat bending forward to listen with the most composed deference, but pressed not in the slightest degree upon her confidence by any question or look down towards the letter, or up towards the lady's face, but straight forward looked he, till, quite provoked by his dulness, Mrs. Beaumont took the matter up again, and, in a new tone, said, "To be candid with you, my dear friend, this is a subject on which I feel some awkwardness and reluctance in speaking to you—for of all men breathing, I should in any important action of my life wish for your approbation; and yet, on the present occasion, I fear, and so does sir John, that you will utterly disapprove of the match."

She paused again, to be asked—What match? But compelled by her auditor's invincible silence to make out her own case, she proceeded: "You must know, my good sir, that sir John Hunter is, it seems, unconquerably bent upon a connexion with this family; for being refused by the daughter, he has proposed for the mother!"

"Yes," said Mr. Palmer, bowing.

"I thought you would have been more surprised," said Mrs. Beaumont: "I am glad the first sound of the thing does not, as I was afraid it would, startle or revolt you."

"Startle me, it could not, madam," said Mr. Palmer, "for I have been prepared for it some time past."

"Is it possible? And who could have mentioned it to you—captain Lightbody?"

"Captain Lightbody!" cried Mr. Palmer, with a sudden flash of indignation: "believe me, madam, I never thought of speaking to captain Lightbody of your affairs. I am not in the habit of listening to such people."

"But still, he might have spoken."

"No, madam, no; he would not have dared to have spoken to me on such a subject. Old as I am, I think I should kick a man down stairs who dared to bring me secret information."

"Honourable! quite honourable! But then, my dear sir, how came you to know the thing?"

"I saw it. You know, madam, those who stand by always see more than the players."

"And do you think my son and daughter, and captain Walsingham, know it too?"

"I fancy not; for they have not been standers-by; they have been deeply engaged themselves."

"That's well—for I wished to have your opinion and advice in the first place, before I hinted it even to them, or any one else living. As I feared the match would not meet your approbation, I told sir John so, and I gave him only a provisional consent."

"Like the provisional consent of that young Irish lady," said Mr. Palmer, laughing, "who went through the marriage service with her lover, adding at the end of each response, 'provided my father gives his consent*.' But, madam, though I am old enough

* See Annual Register, 1761, for an entertaining account of the trial of Mr. M'Naughton.

certainly to be your father, yet even if I had the honour to be so in reality, as you are arrived at years of discretion, you know you cannot need my consent."

"But seriously, my excellent friend," cried she, "I never could be happy in marrying against your approbation. And let me, in my own vindication, explain to you the whole of the affair."

Here Mr. Palmer, dreading one of her long explanations, which he knew he should never comprehend, besought her not to invest him with the unbecoming character of her judge. He represented that no vindication was necessary, and that none could be of any use. She however persisted in going through a sentimental defence of her conduct. She assured Mr. Palmer, that she had determined never to marry again; that her inviolable respect for her dear colonel Beaumont's memory had induced her to persist in this resolution for many years. That motives of delicacy and generosity were what first prevailed with her to listen to sir John's suit; and that now she consoled and supported herself by the proud reflection, that she was acting as her dear colonel Beaumont himself, could he know the circumstances and read her heart, would wish and enjoin her to act.

Here a smile seemed to play upon Mr. Palmer's countenance, but the smile had vanished in an instant, and was followed by a sudden gush of tears, which were as suddenly wiped away. Not, however, before they reminded Mrs. Beaumont to spread her handkerchief before her face.

"Perhaps," resumed she, after a decent pause, "perhaps I am doing wrong with the best intentions. Some people think that widows should never, on

any account, marry again, and perhaps Mr. Palmer is of this opinion?"

"No, by no means," said Mr. Palmer; "nor was colonel Beaumont. Often and often he said in his letters to me, that he wished his wife to marry again after he was gone, and to be as happy after his death as she had been during his life. I only hope that your choice may fulfil—may justify——" Mr. Palmer stopped again—something in Shakspeare, about preying on garbage, ran in his head; and, when Mrs. Beaumont went on to some fresh topics of vindication, and earnestly pressed for his *advice*, he broke up the conference by exclaiming, "'Fore Jupiter, madam, we had better say nothing more about the matter; for, after all, what can the wit of man or woman make of it, but that you choose to marry sir John Hunter, and that nobody in the world has a right to object to it? There is certainly no occasion to use any management with me; and your eloquence is only wasting itself, for I am not so presumptuous, or so unreasonable, as to set myself up for the judge of your actions. You do me honour by consulting me; but as you already know my opinion of the gentleman, I must decline saying any thing further on the subject."

Mrs. Beaumont was left in a painful state of doubt as to the main point, whether Mr. Palmer would or would not alter his will. However, as she was determined that the match should be accomplished, she took advantage of the declaration Mr. Palmer made, that he had no right to object to her following her own inclinations; and she told sir John Hunter that Mr. Palmer was perfectly satisfied; and that he had indeed relieved her mind from some foolish scruples, by having assured her that it was colonel Beaumont's

particular wish, often expressed in his confidential letters, that his widow should marry again. So far, so good. Then the affair was to be broken to her son and daughter. She begged Mr. Palmer would undertake, for her sake, this delicate task ; but he declined it with a frank simplicity.

“ Surely, madam,” said he, “ you can speak without difficulty to your own son and daughter ; and I have through life observed, that employing one person to speak to another is almost always hurtful. I should not presume, however, to regulate your conduct, madam, by my observations ; I should only give this as a reason for declining the office with which you proposed to honour me.”

The lady, compelled to speak for herself to her son and daughter, opened the affair to them with as much delicacy and address as she had used with Mr. Palmer. Their surprise was great ; for they had not the most remote idea of her intentions. The result of a tedious conversation of three hours' length was perfectly satisfactory to her, though it would have been to the highest degree painful and mortifying to a woman of more feeling, or one less intent upon *an establishment*, a reversionary title, and the Wigram estate. How low she sunk in the opinion of her children and her friends was comparatively matter of small consequence to Mrs. Beaumont, provided she could keep fair appearances with the world. Whilst her son and daughter were so much ashamed of her intended marriage, that they would not communicate their sentiments even to each other,—they, with becoming duty, agreed, that Mrs. Beaumont was very good in speaking to them on the subject ; as she had an uncontrollable right to marry as she thought proper.

Mrs. Beaumont now wrote letters innumerable to her extensive circle of connexions and acquaintance, announcing her approaching nuptials, and inviting them to her wedding. It was settled by Mrs. Beaumont, that the three marriages should *take place* on the same day. This point she laboured with her usual address, and at last brought the parties concerned to give up their wishes for a private wedding, to gratify her love for show and parade. Nothing now remained but to draw the settlements. Mrs. Beaumont, who piqued herself upon her skill in business, and who thought the sum of wisdom was to excel in cunning, looked over her lawyer's draughts, and suggested many nice emendations, which obtained for her from an attorney the praise of being a vastly clever woman. Sir John was not, on his side, deficient in attention to his own interests. Never was there a pair better matched in this respect; never were two people going to be married more afraid that each should *take the other in*. Sir John, however, pressed forward the business with an eagerness that surprised every body. Mrs. Beaumont again and again examined the settlements, to try to account prudentially for her lover's impatience; but she *saw* that *all* was right there on her part, and her self-love at last acquiesced in the belief that sir John's was now the ardour of a real lover. To the lady's entire satisfaction, the liveries, the equipages, the diamonds, the wedding clothes were all bought, and the wedding-day approached. Mrs. Beaumont's rich and fashionable connexions and acquaintance all promised to grace her nuptials. Nothing was talked of but the preparations for Mrs. Beaumont and sir John Hunter's marriage; and so full of business and bustle, and mysteries, and *sentimentalities*, and vanities was she,

that she almost forgot that any body was to be married but herself. The marriages of her son and daughter seemed so completely to merge in the importance and splendour of her own, that she merely recollected them as things that were to be done on the same day, as subordinate parts that were to be acted by inferior performers, whilst she should engross the public interest and applause. In the mean time miss Hunter was engaged, to Mrs. Beaumont's satisfaction and her own, in superintending the wedding dresses, and in preparing the most elegant dress imaginable for herself, as bride's-maid. Now and then she interrupted these occupations with sighs and fits of pretty sentimental dejection; but Mrs. Beaumont was well convinced that a new lover would soon make her forget her disappointment. The nephew was written to, and invited to spend some time with his aunt, immediately after her marriage; for she determined that miss Hunter should be her niece, since she could not be her daughter. This secondary intrigue went on delightfully in our heroine's imagination, without interfering with the main business of her own marriage. The day, the long-expected day, that was to crown all her hopes, at length arrived.

CHAPTER XVI.

"On peut, être plus fin qu'un autre, mais pas plus fin que tous les autres." ROCHEFOUCAULT.

THE following paragraph *, extracted from the newspapers of the day, will, doubtless, be acceptable to a large class of readers.

FASHIONABLE HYMENEALS.

"Yesterday, sir John Hunter, of Hunter Hall, Devonshire, bart., led to the hymeneal altar the accomplished Mrs. Beaumont, relict of the late colonel Beaumont, of Beaumont Park. On the same day her son and daughter were also married—Mr. Beaumont to miss Walsingham, daughter of E. Walsingham, esq. of Walsingham House;—and miss Beaumont to captain Walsingham of the navy, a near relation of Edward Walsingham, esq. of Walsingham House.

"These nuptials in the Beaumont family were graced by an overflowing concourse of beauty, nobility, and fashion, comprehending all the relations, connexions, intimate friends, and particular acquaintances of the interesting and popular Mrs. Beaumont. The cavalcade reached from the principal front of the house to the south gate of the park, a distance of three-quarters of a mile. Mrs. Beaumont and her daughter, two lovely brides, in a superb landau, were attired in the most elegant, becoming, fashionable, and costly manner: their dress consisting

* Supposed to be from the pen of Mr. Twigg, who was presented with a living in the gift of Mrs. Beaumont.

of the finest lace, over white satin. Mrs. Beaumont's was point lace; and she was also distinguished by a long veil of the most exquisite texture, which added a tempered grace to beauty in its meridian. In the same landau appeared the charming brides'-maids, all in white of course. Among these, miss Hunter attracted particular attention, by the felicity of her costume. Her drapery, which was of delicate lace, being happily adapted to show to the greatest advantage the captivating contour of her elegant figure, and ornamented with white silk fringe and tassels, marked every airy motion of her sylph-like form.

"The third bride on this auspicious day was miss Walsingham, who, with her father and bride's-maids, followed in Mr. Walsingham's carriage. Miss Walsingham, we are informed, was dressed with simple elegance, in the finest produce of the Indian loom; but, as she was in a covered carriage, we could not obtain a full view of her attire. Next to the brides' equipages, followed the bridegrooms'. And chief of these sir John Hunter sported a splendid barouche. He was dressed in the height of the ton, and his horses deserved particular admiration. After sir John's barouche came the equipage belonging to Mr. Beaumont, highly finished, but plain: in this were the two bridegrooms, Mr. Beaumont and captain Walsingham, accompanied by Mr. Palmer (the great West-Indian Palmer), who, we understand, is the intimate friend and relative of the Beaumont family. Then followed, as our correspondent counted, above a hundred carriages of distinction, with a prodigious cavalcade of gentry. The whole was closed by a long line of attendants and domestics. The moment the park gates were opened, groups of young girls, of the Beaumont tenantry, habited in white, with knots of

ribands, and emblematical devices suited to the occasion, and with baskets of flowers in their hands, began to strew vegetable incense before the brides, especially before Mrs. Beaumont's landau.

'And whilst the priests accuse the bride's delay,
Roses and myrtles still obstruct her way.'

"The crowd, which assembled as they proceeded along the road to the church, and in the churchyard, was such, that however gratefully it evinced the popularity of the amiable parties, it became at last evidently distressing to the principal object of their homage—Mrs. Beaumont, who could not have stood the gaze of public admiration but for the friendly and becoming, yet tantalizing refuge of her veil. Constables were obliged to interfere to clear the path to the church door, and the amiable almost fainting lady was from the arms of her anxious and alarmed bride's-maids lifted out of her landau, and supported into the church and up the aisle with all the marked gallantry of true tenderness, by her happy bridegroom, sir John Hunter.

"After the ceremony was over, sir John and lady Hunter, and the two other new married couples, returned to Beaumont Park with the *cortège* of their friends, where the company partook of an elegant collation. The artless graces and fascinating affability of lady Hunter won all hearts; and the wit, festive spirits, and politeness of sir John, attracted universal admiration—not to say envy of all present. Immediately after the collation, the happy couple set off for their seat at Hunter Hall.

"Mr. Beaumont, and the new Mrs. Beaumont, remained at Beaumont Park. Captain and Mrs. Walsingham repaired to Mr. Walsingham's.

"It is a singular circumstance, communicated to us by the indisputable authority of one of the bride's-maids, that miss Walsingham, as it was discovered after the ceremony, was actually married with her gown the wrong side outwards. Whether this be an omen announcing good fortune to *all* the parties concerned, we cannot take upon us to determine; but this much we may safely assert, that never distinguished female in the annals of fashion was married under more favourable auspices than the amiable lady Hunter. And it is universally acknowledged, that no lady is better suited to be, as in the natural course of things she will soon be, countess of Puckeridge, and at the head of the great Wigram estate."

So ends our newspaper writer.

Probably this paragraph was sent to the press before the *fashionable hymeneals* had actually taken place. This may in some measure account for the extraordinary omissions in the narrative. After the three marriages had been solemnized, just when the ceremony was over, and lady Hunter was preparing to receive the congratulations of the brilliant congregation, she observed that the clergyman, instead of shutting his book, kept it open before him, and looked round, as if expecting another bride. Mrs. Beaumont, we should say lady Hunter, curtsied to him, smiled, and made a sign that the ceremony was finished: but at this instant, to her astonishment, she saw her bride's-maid, miss Hunter, quit her place, and beheld captain Lightbody seize her hand, and lead her up towards the altar. Lady Hunter broke through the crowd that was congratulating her, and reaching miss Hunter, drew her back forc-

bly, and whispered, "Are you mad, miss Hunter? Is this a place, a time for frolic? What are you about?"

"Going to be married, ma'am! following your ladyship's good example," answered her bride's-maid, flip-pantly,—at the same time springing forward from the detaining grasp, regardless even of the rent she made in her lace dress, she hurried, or was hurried on by captain Lightbody.

"Captain Lightbody!" cried lady Hunter; but, answering only with a triumphant bow, he passed on with his bride.

"Heavens! will nobody stop him?" cried lady Hunter, overtaking them again as they reached the steps. She addressed herself to the clergyman. "Sir, she is a ward in chancery, and under my protection; they have no licence; their bans have not been published; you cannot, dare not, surely, marry them?"

"Pardon me, lady Hunter," said captain Lightbody; "I have shown Mr. Twigg my licence."

"I have seen it—I thought it was with your ladyship's knowledge," replied Mr. Twigg. "I—I cannot object—it would be at my own peril. If there is any lawful impediment, your ladyship will make it at the proper response."

A friend of captain Lightbody's appeared in readiness to give the young lady away.

"The ceremony must go on, madam," said the clergyman.

"At your peril, sir!" said lady Hunter. "This young lady is a ward of chancery, and not of age!"

"I am of age—of age last month," cried the bride.

"Not till next year."

"Of age last month. I have the parish register," said captain Lightbody. "Go on, sir, if you please."

"Good Heavens! Miss Hunter, can you bear," said lady Hunter, "to be the object of this indecent altercation? Retire with me, and only let me speak to you, I conjure you!"

No—the young lady stood her ground, resolute to be a bride.

"If there is any lawful impediment, your ladyship will please to make it at the proper response," said the chaplain. "I am under a necessity of proceeding."

The ceremony went on.

Lady Hunter, in high indignation, retired immediately to the vestry-room with her bridegroom. "At least," cried she, throwing herself upon a seat, "it shall never be said that I countenanced, by my presence, such a scandalous marriage! Oh, sir John Hunter, why did you not interfere to save your own sister?"

"Save her! Egad, she did not choose to be saved. Who can save a woman that does not choose it? What could I do? Is not she your ladyship's pupil? —he! he! he! But I'll fight the rascal directly, if that will give you any satisfaction."

"And he shall have a lawsuit too for her fortune!" said lady Hunter; "for she is not of age. I have a memorandum in an old pocket-book. O! who would have thought such a girl could have duped me so!"

Lady Hunter's exclamations were interrupted by the entrance of her son and daughter, who came to offer what consolation they could. The brilliant congregation poured in a few minutes afterwards, with their mingled congratulations and condolence, eager, we all things, to satisfy their curiosity.

Captain Lightbody, with invincible assurance, came up just as lady Hunter was getting into her carriage, and besought permission to present his bride to her. But lady Hunter, turning her back upon him without reply, said to her son, "If captain Lightbody is going to Beaumont Park, I am not going there."

Mrs. Lightbody, who was now emancipated from all control, and from all sense of propriety, called out from her *own* carriage, in which she was seated, "That, thank Heaven! she had a house of her own to go to, and that nothing was farther from her thoughts than to interrupt the festivities of lady Hunter's more mature nuptials."

Delighted with having made this tart answer, Mrs. Lightbody ordered her husband to order her coachman to drive off as fast as possible. The captain, by her particular desire, had taken a house for her at Brighton, the gayest place she could think of. We leave this amiable bride rejoicing in the glory of having duped a lady of Mrs. Beaumont's penetration; and her bridegroom rejoicing still more in the parish register, by the help of which he hoped to obtain full enjoyment of what he knew to be his bride's most valuable possession—her portion, and to defy lady Hunter's threatened lawsuit.

In the mean time, lady Hunter, in her point lace and beautiful veil, seated beside her baronet, in his new barouche, endeavoured to forget this interruption of her triumph. She considered, that though miss Hunter's fortune was lost to her family, yet the title of countess, and the Wigram estate, were *secure*, this was solid consolation; and recovering her features from their unprecedented discomposure, she forced smiles and looks suitable to the occasion, as she bowed to congratulating passengers.

Arrived at Beaumont Park, she prepared, without appetite, to partake of the elegant collation, and to do the honours with her accustomed grace: she took care to seat Mr. Palmer beside her, that she might show the world on what good terms they were together. She was pleased to see, that though two younger brides sat near her, she engaged by far the largest share of public admiration. They were so fully content and engrossed by their own feelings, that they did not perceive that they were what is called *thrown into the shade*. All the pride, pomp, and circumstance of these glorious hymeneals appeared to them but as a dream, or as a scene that was acting before them, in which they were not called to take a part. Towards the end of the collation, one of the guests, my lord Rider, a nobleman, who always gave himself the air of being in a prodigious hurry, declared that he was under the necessity of going off, for he expected a person to meet him at his house in town, on some particular business, at an appointed day. His lordship's travelling companion, who was unwilling to quit so prematurely the present scene of festivity, observed that the man of business had engaged to write to his lordship, and that he should at least wait till the post should come in. Lady Hunter politely sent to inquire if any letters had arrived for his lordship; and in consequence of his impatience, all the letters for the family were brought: lady Hunter distributed them. There was one for captain Walsingham, with a Spanish motto on the seal: lady Hunter, as she gave it to him, whispered to Amelia, "Don't be jealous, my dear, but that I can tell you is a letter from his Spanish incognita." Amelia smiled with a look of the most perfect confidence and love. Captain Walsingham immediately

opened the letter ; and looking at the signature, said, " It is not from my Spanish incognita, it is from her aunt—I will read it by-and-by."

" A fine evasion, indeed !" exclaimed lady Hunter : " look how coolly he puts it into his pocket ! Ah, my credulous Amelia, do you allow him to begin in this manner ?" pursued she, in a tone of raillery, yet as if she really suspected something wrong in the letter ; " and have you no *curiosity*, Mrs. Walsingham ?"

Amelia declared that she had none ; that she was not one of those who think that jealousy is the best proof of love.

" Right, right," said Mr. Palmer : " confidence is the best proof of love ; and yours, I'll venture to say, is, and ever will be, well placed."

Captain Walsingham, with a grateful smile, took his letter again out of his pocket, and immediately began to read it in a low voice to Amelia, lady Hunter, and Mr. Palmer.

" DEAR SIR,

" Though almost a stranger to you, I should think myself wanting in gratitude, if I did not, after all the services you have done my family, write to thank you in my niece's name and in my own : and much I regret that my words will so ill convey to you the sentiments of our hearts. I am an old woman, not well accustomed to use my pen in the way of letter-writing ; but can say truly, that whilst I have life I shall be grateful to you. You have restored me to happiness, by restoring to me my long-lost niece. It will, I am sure, give you satisfaction to hear, that my niece——"

Captain Walsingham stopped short, with a look

which confirmed lady Hunter in all her suspicions, which made Mr. Palmer take out his snuff-box, which startled even Mr. Beaumont, but which did not raise in the mind of Amelia the slightest feeling of doubt or suspicion. She smiled, and looked round at her alarmed friends, with a manner which seemed to say, "Can you suppose it possible that there can be any thing wrong?"

"Pray go on, captain Walsingham," said lady Hunter, "unless—unless you have particular—very particular reasons."

"I have particular, very particular reasons," said captain Walsingham: "and since," turning to Amelia, "this confiding lady does not insist upon my going on——"

"O," said lady Hunter, gaily, snatching the letter, "I am not such a credulous, or, as you call it, confiding lady."

"I beg of your ladyship not to read it," said captain Walsingham, in an earnest tone.

"You beg of me not to read it—and with that alarmed look—O, positively, I must, and will read it."

"Not at present, then, I entreat you!"

"~~This~~ very instant," cried lady Hunter, affecting all the imperious vivacity of a young bride, under favour of which she determined to satisfy her malicious curiosity.

"Pray, lady Hunter, do not read it," repeated captain Walsingham, laying his hand over the letter. "It is for your own sake," added he, in a low and earnest voice, "it is for your own sake, ~~not~~ mine, that I beg of you to forbear."

Lady Hunter, imagining this to be only a subterfuge, drew the letter from beneath captain Walsingham's hand, exclaiming, "For *my* sake! O, cap-

tain, that is a charming *ruse de guerre*, but do not hope that it shall succeed !”

“ O mother, believe him, believe him,” cried Amelia : “ I am sure he tells you the truth, and he speaks for your sake, not for his own.”

Amelia interceded in vain.

Mr. Palmer patted Amelia’s shoulder fondly, saying, “ You are a dear good creature.”

“ A dear credulous creature !” exclaimed lady Hunter. She had now undisturbed possession of the letter.

Captain Walsingham stood by with a face of great concern ; in which Amelia, and Mr. Beaumont, without knowing the cause, seemed to sympathise.

The contest had early attracted the attention of all within hearing or view of her ladyship, and by this time had been pointed out and accounted for in whispers, even to the most remote parts of the room ; so that the eyes of almost every individual in the assembly were now fixed upon lady Hunter. She had scarcely glanced her eye upon the letter, when she turned pale as death, and exclaimed, “ He knew it ! —he knew it !” Then recollecting herself, she made a struggle to conceal her dismay—the forced smile quivered on her lip ; she fell back in a swoon, and was carried out of the room by her son and daughter. Sir John Hunter was at another table, eating grouse-pie, and was the last person present who was made to understand what had happened.

“ It is the damned heat of the room, I suppose,” said he, “ that made her faint ;” and swallowing the last morsel on his plate, and settling his collar, he came up to captain Walsingham. “ What’s this I hear ?—that lady Hunter has fainted ? I hope they

have carried her into the air.—But where's the letter they say affected her so?"

"In my pocket," said captain Walsingham, coolly.

"Any thing new in it?" said sir John, with a sulky, fashionable indifference.

"Nothing new to you, probably, sir John," said captain Walsingham, walking away from him in disgust.

"I suppose it was the heat overcame lady Hunter," continued sir John, speaking to those who stood near him. "Is any body gone to see how she is now? I wonder if they'll let me in to see her."

With assumed carelessness, but with real embarrassment, the bridegroom went to inquire for his bride.

Good Mr. Palmer went soon afterwards, and knocked softly at the lady's door. "Is poor lady Hunter any better?"

"O, yes; quite well again now," cried lady Hunter, raising herself from the bed, on which she had been laid; but Mr. Palmer thought, as he saw her through the half-opened door, she still looked a deplorable spectacle, in all her wedding finery. "Quite well again, now. It was nothing in the world but the heat. Amelia, my love, go back to the company, and say so, lest my friends should be uneasy. Thank you, kind Mr. Palmer, for coming to see me. Excuse my not being able to let you in now, for I must change my dress. Sir John sends me word his barouche will be at the door in ten minutes, and I have to hurry on my travelling dress—excuse me."

Mr. Palmer retired, seeing clearly that she wished to avoid any explanation of the real cause of her

fainting. In the gallery, leading from her room, he met captain Walsingham, who was coming to inquire for lady Hunter.

"Poor woman! do you know the cause of her fainting?" said captain Walsingham.

"No; and I believe she does not wish me to know it: therefore don't tell it me," said Mr. Palmer.

"It is a secret that must be in the public papers in a few days," said captain Walsingham. "This lady that I brought over from Lisbon——"

"Well, what can she have to say to Mrs. Beaumont?"

"Nothing to Mrs. Beaumont, but a great deal to lady Hunter. You may remember that I mentioned to you some of her relations had contrived to have her kept in that convent abroad, and had spread a report of her death, that the heir-at-law might defraud her of her property, and get and keep possession of a large estate, which fell to him in case of her death. Of further particulars, or even of the name of this estate, I knew nothing, till this morning, when that letter from the aunt—here it is—tells me, that the estate to which her niece was entitled is the great Wigram estate, and that old Wigram was the rascally heir-at-law. The lawyer I recommended to the lady was both an honest and a clever fellow; and he represented so forcibly to old Wigram the consequences of his having his fraud brought to light in a court of equity, that he made him soon agree to a private reference. The affair has been compromised, and settled thus. The possession of the estate is given up, just as it stands, to the rightful owner; and she forbears to call the old sinner to an account for past arrears. She will let him make it

out to the world, and to his own conscience, if he can, that he bonâ-fide believed her to be dead."

"So," said Mr. Palmer, "so end madam Beaumont's hopes of being at the head of the Wigram estate, and so end her hopes of being a countess! And actually married to this ruined spendthrift!—Now we see the reason he pressed on the match so, and urged her to marry him before the affair should become public. She is duped, and for life!—poor madam Beaumont!"

At this moment lady Hunter came out of her room, after having changed her dress, and repaired her smiles.

"Ready for my journey now," said she, passing by Mr. Palmer quickly. "I must show myself to the world of friends below, and bid them adieu. One word, captain Walsingham—there's no occasion, you know," whispered she, "to say any thing *below*, of that letter—I really don't believe it."

Too proud to let her mortification be known, lady Hunter constrained her feelings with all her might. She appeared once more with a pleased countenance in the festive assembly. She received their compliments and congratulations, and invited them, with all the earnestness of friendship, to favour sir John and her, as soon as possible, with their company at Hunter Hall. The company were now fast departing. Carriages came to the door in rapid succession. Lady Hunter went through with admirable grace and variety the sentimental ceremony of taking leave; and when her splendid barouche was at the door, and when she was to bid adieu to her own family, still she acted her part inimitably. In all the becoming mixed smiles and tears of a bride, she was seen em-

bracing by turns her beloved daughter and son, and daughter-in-law and son-in-law, over and over again, in the hall, on the steps, to the last moment contriving to be torn delightfully from the bosom of her family by her impatient bridegroom. Seated beside him in his barouche, she kissed her hand to Mr. Palmer,—smiled; and all her family, who stood on the steps, bowed, and sir John drove away with his prize.

“He’s a swindler!” cried Mr. Palmer, “—and she is——”

“Amelia’s mother,” interrupted captain Walsingham.

“Right,” said Mr. Palmer; “but Amelia had a father too, my excellent friend, colonel Beaumont, whom she and her brother resemble in all that is open-hearted and honourable. Well! well! I make no reflections; I hate moral reflections. Every body can think and feel for themselves, I presume. I only say,—Thank Heaven, we’ve done with *manœuvring*!

END OF VOL. VIII.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.



